THE CANONISATION OF SAINTS.

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THE CANONISATION OF SAINTS

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VENERABLE OLIVER PLUNKETT,

ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH.

After a Picture by G. Morphey, in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE CANONISATION OF SAINTS

BY

REV. THOMAS F. MACKEN

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LETTER OF CARDINAL LOGUE.

Ara Cœli,

Armagh,

26th October, 1909.

My Dear Canon Macken,

I have just looked through your treatise on "The Canonisation of Saints," and I find it to be a very learned, accurate and interesting work. The slight studies I have had to make myself in connection with the Apostolic Process for the Beatification of Venerable Oliver Plunkett give me some idea of the labour you must have expended on this admirable work. I have great pleasure in testifying that the fruit of your labours is well worthy of the effort it must have cost you. The book is clear, orderly, well written, and brings within reach of English readers a great mass of reliable information on a subject of engrossing interest. Hitherto the knowledge of even educated persons on this subject was very vague and superficial. It was only by reading long,

complicated Latin treatises, which were accessible to few, that an accurate idea could be formed of the care the Church takes before presenting the chosen servants of God to the veneration of the faithful; but your book leaves no further excuse for ignorance or inaccurate knowledge of this important subject.

I earnestly recommend it to the faithful as a book which will interest, instruct and edify them. I trust it shall be extensively read; and I am sure its readers will be grateful to you for the boon you have conferred upon them.

Heartily congratulating you on your successful labours, and wishing you every blessing,

I am,

Dear Canon Macken,

Yours faithfully,

✠ *MICHAEL CARD. LOGUE.*

INTRODUCTION

It is somewhat remarkable that up to the present time there has been no work published in the English language which deals fully with the beatification and canonisation of saints. In his "Essay on Beatification and Canonisation" Father Faber treats some of the moral aspects of the subject; and in the public Press glowing descriptions are to be found of the ceremonies in St. Peter's when some servant of God is raised to the altars of the Church. But no English writer has explained the significance of these ceremonies, or described the long series of ecclesiastical enquiries and judgments which precede the final sentence of the Supreme Pontiff. And yet the subject opens up a field of most interesting and profitable study. What is it that constitutes sanctity? What is the degree of virtue, and what are the proofs of virtue required by the Church for those who are placed on the catalogue of saints? How does the sanctity of martyrs

differ from that of confessors? What are the obstacles to canonisation? Besides the evidence of human testimony, is it also required that God should intervene directly to prove the holiness of His saints? What was the discipline of the Church in the matter of canonisation at different periods? These are questions of living and perennial interest not only for Catholics, but also for those who belong to other creeds.

The beatification of Joan of Arc in the early part of this year invests the subject of canonisation with special interest at the present time. The Maid of Orleans is one of the most attractive and picturesque figures that ever crossed the stage of history. Almost from her cradle she mourned with passionate devotion over the sorrows of down-trodden France, and soon she believed that she was inspired by God to save her fallen country. Yet when her heavenly mission was defined for her she said with simple pathos "I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side, for this is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it for my Lord wills it." For close on five centuries the Maid of Orleans was enshrined a saint in the popular imagination, and her solemn

beatification in the present year sent a thrill of rejoicing through the whole Catholic world.

Turning our thoughts to our own country there are notable events occurring at the present moment which must give the subject of canonisation an intense national interest. It is well known that the claims to martyrdom of some of those heroic souls who suffered death in the sixteenth and following centuries are now undergoing investigation by ecclesiastical authority, and that the cause of Venerable Oliver Plunkett, the saintly Archbishop of Armagh, has reached a more advanced stage on the road to canonisation. This holy prelate belonged to one of the saddest, and at the same time one of the most glorious, periods in the history of our country. It was sad because of the dread sufferings, civil disability, imprisonment, torture and death inflicted on the Catholic population, and it was glorious with an immortal glory, because rather than deny their religious faith the Catholics of Ireland suffered with a constancy and fortitude unsurpassed in the annals of the Church. The life and death of Oliver Plunkett shed a lustre on the age in which he lived, and must excite in many Catholic minds

abiding sentiments of affectionate veneration. Even the most prejudiced historians bear witness to his sanctity, his austerity, and transparent sincerity, as well as to the calmness and courage with which he endured the death penalty at Tyburn. The sufferings of Oliver Plunkett and his compatriots must stir the heart of every Irishman, and it must surely be a labour of love to follow these sufferers in the severe ordeal required on the part of the Church before they are adorned with the martyr's crown.

Then again the canonisation of saints is intimately connected with the existence of miracles, a subject which throws such a flood of light on our ultimate destiny, and must always possess a special interest for the serious and thoughtful mind. It was whilst preparing a short paper on miracles some few years ago that the writer's attention was specially directed to the subject of canonisation. He saw that holy men and women were raised to the altars of the Church almost year after year, and he learned that this distinction was never given to them unless miracles had been worked in proof of their sanctity. For the Church before recognising claims to canonisation

always examines the very nature and reality of the miracles attributed to the servant of God. These miracles are for the most part of recent occurrence, and many of them belong to our own day. Here then we are brought face to face with the miracles themselves, and with the evidence in their favour which is accepted as satisfactory by the Church. Thus our faith is strengthened in the scheme of Divine revelation and in the system established by God for its interpretation to fallen humanity.

The age in which we live is materialistic, and there is a widespread tendency to disregard or minimise the supernatural. The human intellect is largely occupied with political and utilitarian problems, and the social improvement of the race engrosses universal attention. It follows that higher interests are often overlooked, a wrong perspective is set up, false standards of greatness are accepted, and the importance of moral excellence, man's noblest perfection, is dwarfed in the minds of the multitude. In these circumstances it is much to be desired that the true ideal should be pointed out as a beacon to give warning of the intellectual and moral dangers

that surround us; and nowhere do we find the true Christian standard more accurately defined than in the ecclesiastical procedure for the canonisation of saints.

Considerations like these give some reason to hope that this book would be found interesting and acceptable at the present time.

To avoid overloading the pages with references it may be stated here once for all that this treatise is based mainly on the great work of Pope Benedict XIV., *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione*, which is universally regarded as a classic on this subject. The writer has also derived valuable assistance, both as to the order and details of the procedure, from the works of Fornari and Trama, both of which are written in Latin—*Codex pro Postulatoribus*, Joseph Fornari, Rome, 1899, and *Manuale Theorico-Practicum pro conficiendis Processibus*, Trama, Naples, 1904. The theological views expressed here are those commonly held by theologians; and under this head, besides those already mentioned, the writings of Ferraris, Murray and Perrone, amongst others, were consulted.

To ensure accuracy the work has been revised throughout by competent authority, and, thanks to kind friends in Rome, the author is enabled in the following pages to put the reader in touch with the very latest beatifications and canonisations. Nothing is suppressed, nothing altered, and the aim of the writer all along has been, not so much to attempt a literary treatment of the subject, as to state plainly and fully the teaching and practice as they exist in this important department of the activities of the Church.

In obedience to the Decree of His Holiness Pope Urban VIII. the author hereby declares that he claims for the statements in this book no other authority than arises from merely human sources. In all respects he submits the work without any reserve to the correction of the Holy See.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1909.

The Canonisation of Saints

CHAPTER I

Nature of Beatification and Canonisation

CANONISATION is an ecclesiastical term which first came into use in the twelfth century; but the act which it designates has been in existence in the Church from Apostolic times. During the earlier ages canonisation consisted in writing the names of the persons to be canonised on certain tablets which were read at Mass, and these blessed names still continue to be mentioned in the august mysteries.

But as now understood and practised *canonisation* is the final declaration of the Sovereign Pontiff, by which he publicly and solemnly places on the catalogue of saints a person who has been beatified, and commends him or her, under precept, to the perpetual veneration and invocation of Christians throughout the universal

Church. *Beatification*, on the other hand, is an act by which the Pope permits religious honour to be paid to the deceased, or commands such veneration, but not with regard to the whole Church. The public veneration paid to a deceased servant of God may be either permissive or preceptive, may be local or universal, and may be restricted to certain liturgical exercises. If the decree regarding religious honour contains a precept and is universal—that is to say, binding on the whole Church—it is a decree of canonisation. If either of these elements is lacking it is a decree of beatification. The cultus to be paid to those who are beatified is usually confined to a particular country, or town, or to a certain religious order or branch of an order, and all attempts to extend it without a special indult from the Pope are condemned under very severe penalties. Thus Blessed Rose of Lima was made Patron of all America, the Philippines, and the Indies, and the cultus to be extended to her was made obligatory and general for the countries named; but, lacking complete preceptive universality, there was, strictly speaking, no canonisation. Similarly, though the cultus of Blessed John Boni was permitted by Sixtus IV. for the universal Church, since there was no precept but merely a permission there was only beatification.

There are restrictions also with regard to the liturgical exercises connected with those who are beatified. Though it is sometimes permitted to say Mass or recite the divine office in their honour, yet their office has no octave, and they cannot be honoured by a Votive Mass. Nor can their pictures be painted with a diadem or crown on the head ; the proper mode of depicting a beatified person is with rays proceeding from the head as centre. In like manner other methods of paying them religious honour are interdicted.

In order to understand more clearly these definitions it will be useful to explain briefly the precise meaning of some terms that are often used in connection with this sacred subject. It sometimes happens that persons speak of the *Venerable* Bede and *Blessed* Leonard of Port Maurice, for example, without attaching any very definite idea to these distinguishing titles.

It may be observed, then, that there are three principal degrees of sanctity recognised in the Church—that of *Venerable*, that of *Blessed*, and that of *Saint*. Before obtaining a right to any of these three titles a deceased person who has died in the odour of sanctity may be known as a *servant of God*. In order that anyone may be regarded as a *servant of God* no formal pronouncement is required on the part of the Church ;

it is sufficient that the deceased person should enjoy a wide reputation for holiness of life. It is to be observed, however, that, according to the existing custom of the Congregation of Rites, the title *servant of God* is given only to those whose beatification is under consideration, and they are called by this name in all decrees and writings connected with the cause.

The term *Venerable* or *Venerable servant of God* implies more than a mere character of holiness, and it is applied to one whose reputation for sanctity not only exists, but is furthermore judicially established. Strictly speaking, this title is to be given to those only in whose causes the Commission of Introduction has been signed by the Pope. When the Informative Process on the reputation for sanctity is complete, the acts and minutes are sent to Rome to be examined by the Congregation, and if its decision is favourable the Sovereign Pontiff signs a decree ordering the Introduction of the Cause. When Rome has thus placed its hand on the cause, to use the language of Canon Law, the person in question has a right to the title Venerable. But this right does not imply that religious honour may be paid to him, all such honour being strictly forbidden until the stage of beatification has been reached. In this description there is question of the technical

meaning of the word, for in the ordinary use of language the term Venerable is applied to anyone who is entitled to honour and respect.

The terms *Blessed* (Beatus, Beatified) and *Saint* correspond respectively to Beatification and Canonisation. In former times these words, Blessed and Saint, were regarded as synonymous, and they were used promiscuously without distinction of meaning. Even according to modern usage the distinction is not always observed; but in strictness the title of Blessed is given when the process of Beatification is complete, whilst the title of Saint is conferred only upon one who has already received the honour of Canonisation.

Both Beatification and Canonisation are of two kinds—formal and equipollent or equivalent. The distinction in both cases is founded on the exceptional conditions mentioned in the Bull of Urban VIII., 1625, and has reference to the manner in which the cultus is prescribed or permitted. Formal canonisation takes place when the worship of the Beatified is prescribed for the Church at large, by an explicit and definitive decree, issued after full judicial enquiry and accompanied by the ceremonies usual in such cases. Equipollent or equivalent canonisation occurs when the Pope, omitting the ceremonies and some of the judicial processes, orders public

cultus to be paid to some servant of God throughout the Catholic world. This happens when one or more of the conditions laid down in the decree of Urban have been fulfilled—that is to say, when "the servant of God is the object of a cultus arising out of the general consent of the Church, or a custom of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary, or the writings of the Fathers, or the long and intentional tolerance of the Holy See or the Ordinary." Equivalent canonisation usually consists in a Papal decree ordering a special Office and Mass in honour of the Saint. Benedict XIV. gives several examples of equivalent canonisation—Saints Romuald, Norbert, Bruno, Peter Nolasco, Queen Margaret of Scotland, and Gregory VII. And as a proof of the caution observed by the Church in such canonisations, it may be mentioned that the honour of canonisation came to none of those just mentioned until over 400 years after death.

It is clear that the exceptional circumstances mentioned in the Bull of Urban may refer either to canonisation or beatification according as the cultus in question is general in the Church, or merely permitted, and only of a limited and partial kind. If the Pope, without going through the usual lengthy proceedings, accepts one or more of the conditions stated in the Bull, and

authorizes or permits the public cultus of a confessor or martyr in a particular locality, such a declaration would be equipollent beatification. An example of such beatification is furnished by the case of some of the English martyrs under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth who were beatified in 1886. It was shown by the postulator of the cause that the pictures of these martyrs were painted on the English College in Rome, in 1582, with the approval of Gregory XIII., and in such a manner as to give Papal authority for the veneration of the martyrs so depicted. Leo XIII. accepted as proof the authorization of Gregory, and, omitting further enquiry, issued the formal decree of beatification.

Is the Pope infallible in issuing a decree of beatification or canonisation? In regard to beatification, the general teaching of theologians and canonists is that, whether there is question of formal or equipollent beatification, the Papal decree is not infallible. Some hold the contrary view, on the ground that for the process of canonisation there is no new examination of the life and virtues of the Beatus, but merely a judicial pronouncement in regard to the new miracles worked by God at his intercession. Still writers generally maintain that Papal infallibility does not extend to decrees of beatification, since beatifica-

tion is always a permission, not a command, and, whilst it is a step on the road to canonisation, it is not definitive and final.

But that the Church is infallible in the canonisation of saints is a proposition that is beyond all doubt, and this view has been always held with practical unanimity by Catholic writers. St. Thomas says: "Since the honour we pay the saints is in a certain sense a profession of faith—*i.e.*, a belief in the glory of the saints (*qua sanctorum gloriam credimus*)—we must piously believe that in this matter also the judgment of the Church is not liable to error"—*Quodlibet* IX., a. 16. These words of the holy Doctor, supported, as they are, by many similar passages from his writings, are interpreted by his school to mean that he held the doctrine of Papal infallibility in the matter of canonisation. The Popes themselves believe and assert that the decision which they publish on these occasions is infallible. And in works dealing with the subject long lists of the most illustrious theologians are given who are in favour of Papal infallibility in canonisation.

Let us consider briefly some of the arguments which form the basis of this general agreement of theologians. First, taking the decree issued by the Pope in the act of canonisation we see that it is intimately connected with faith and morals.

This decree declares that the person canonised is a saint, and orders that his memory be devoutly and piously celebrated by all the faithful on a particular day each year. The cultus thus prescribed has been at all times an essential part of the public worship of the Church. The long line of saints, beginning with the martyrs in Apostolic times and lengthening with every age, forms a golden chain that binds together the first and second coming of our Saviour. From the moment of canonisation the saints are placed on the glorious roll of those who are set forth for invocation and veneration in the Missal, in the Breviary, in the public liturgy of the Church. And, in thus regulating the honour to be paid to God and His saints, the Church is but obeying the precept of Christ to the Apostles "to observe all things whatever was commanded to them," in the observance of which she is protected from error by the solemn promise of God "to be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Again, Papal infallibility in these matters becomes still more certain and undeniable if we suppose for a moment the possibility of error in canonisation. We are all members of Christ, and we have the unspeakable happiness to belong to that body which, in the words of the inspired writer, is "a glorious Church without spot or

wrinkle "—1 *Eph.* chap. v. The Church is holy in a real and true sense ; and the thought that an error could be committed in canonising a saint is absolutely repugnant to her essential sanctity. For this would imply that a person who was damned and the slave of the devil might be proposed for the veneration of all the faithful, that he should have the enduring title of saint, that he should be invoked as such by the faithful, and that Masses should be celebrated and Offices recited in his honour throughout the universal Church. The very thought of this superstition and impiety—so great a triumph for the evil one—would excite feelings of abhorrence in the mind of a Christian. "In the Church," says St. Thomas, "there can be no damnable error ; but this would be a damnable error, if he were venerated as a saint who was in reality a sinner." The note of holiness in the Church requires, above all things, that her religious worship should be pure and holy, and this stainless purity can be secured only by the prerogative of infallibility in the canonisation of saints. Here then there can be no room for error ; the human and Divine elements in the kingdom of Christ are united to protect and safeguard the worship of His children, and enable them to render unto God an acceptable sacrifice and a clean oblation.

CHAPTER II

Historical Sketch of Canonisation

In every age of the world's history there have been some men who, being endowed with extraordinary natural gifts, have risen to great heights above their fellows. And those whose singular endowments are proclaimed by the general voice have their names preserved in the grateful recollections of posterity. It would seem to be an instinct of human nature to pay honour to those who are distinguished, and, in ancient heathendom, this tendency was carried to such lengths that even religious honour was sometimes rendered to the illustrious dead. The "divinity that doth hedge round a king" was an idea that sprang from the prevalence of this usage. Readers of Livy or of Plutarch will remember that amongst the Romans sacrifices were offered to Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome. And the apotheosis of Romulus was but the prelude to the deification of Cæsar and the Emperor Augustus. As still further illustrating the same tendency, it is worthy of note as a significant historical fact that the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar endeavoured to obtain

the consent of the Roman Senate for the deification of Christ; but the Senate refused its consent, chiefly for the reason that the privilege it claimed of decreeing apotheosis was anticipated by the general verdict of humanity proclaiming that the risen Saviour was truly God.*

The educated classes in China to this day pay religious honour to the philosopher Confucius, and the worship of ancestors is the principal portion of the popular religion. The customs which still exist among many Indian tribes bear witness to the same impulse. Amongst Christian nations, the numerous monuments in Westminster Abbey and in Notre Dame—to name two of the more prominent places—show how universal is the desire to cherish the memory of the great.

The Catholic Church, guided as she is by the Spirit of God, who knows our nature, encourages, nay even commands, us to distinguish with singular honour those of her children whose sanctity and virtues have reached a pre-eminent degree. And to prevent deception, she has established a most careful and deliberate form of procedure to investigate statements of fact and ascertain the moral value of actions.

Having regard to the wide prevalence of

* Tertullian in Apologetico, Cap. V.

apotheosis amongst heathen nations it might be expected that the enemies of the Church would assert that the canonisation of saints is a mere imitation of this heathen practice. This they have accordingly done, declaring that the canonisation of saints corresponds with the apotheosis of the heathens, and that canonisation derives its origin from this ancient pagan custom.

But this calumny is easily answered. The canonisation of saints and the apotheosis of the heathen are wide as the poles asunder, and canonisation is founded not on any practice existing amongst the Gentiles, but on the solid basis of Divine revelation. In apotheosis the person who is honoured actually takes rank amongst the heathen deities and becomes one of them; but the canonised saint is placed amongst the servants and friends of God. "With us," says St. Augustine, "the martyrs are not gods, for the One true God is our God and the God of the martyrs." Further, it is certain that divine honours were paid in ancient Rome and other countries not merely to the emperors, but to their wives and to other women who were blood-relations of the emperor. The testimony of historians and the inscriptions on marble tablets and coins leave no doubt on this point. And the only claim to religious honour possessed by these deified women

was the mere relationship to the head of the empire.

Not only then is the canonisation of saints essentially different from the apotheosis of the heathens, but it is equally true that the custom of canonising servants of God can in no way be traced to the superstitious deification of the Gentiles. Canonisation derives its origin from revealed Catholic doctrine on the invocation of saints and the honour due to them; and the custom of paying religious honour to holy men and seeking their intercession is plainly asserted in the Old Testament. In the fifth chapter of the book of *Josue* we read :—"When Josue was in the field of the city of Jericho he lifted up his eyes, and saw a man standing over against him, holding a drawn sword, and he went to him and said : Art thou one of ours or one of our adversaries ? And he answered : No, but I am a prince of the host of the Lord, and now I am come. Josue fell on his face to the ground, and *worshipping* said : What saith my Lord to His servant ?" And in the second chapter of the Fourth Book of *Kings* we are told that when the sons of the Prophets saw that the spirit of Elias had rested on Eliseus, "coming to meet him they worshipped him, falling to the ground." It matters not that these texts refer to men who were still on earth ;

for if holiness in living men was deserving of worship, much more was this honour due to that holiness which was crowned with immortal glory in heaven.

Furthermore, St. Paul calls Moses a " mediator," and this is his common title in Jewish writers. And beyond all doubt the later Jews believed in the merits and intercession of the saints of Israel. There is no ground for the statement that the canonisation of saints is of pagan origin. No such accusation was made in the early ages of the Church ; but then, as now, Catholics were charged with idolatry for honouring the saints. Such charges were made by the heathens generally, and in particular by Julian the Apostate, by the Manicheans and others. From all this it follows that the canonisation of saints is not founded upon any pagan practice of apotheosis, and if we go back before the coming of our Saviour we find the custom of venerating holy men, and invoking their aid, existing under the Old Law and sanctioned by Divine Revelation.

Canonisation and the veneration of saints are as old as the Church. But in the earlier ages formal sentence of canonisation was not regularly pronounced by appointed judges after a prolonged judicial enquiry ; much less was the right of judgment reserved exclusively to the Holy See.

The bishop of a diocese possessed the right to authorise that religious honour be paid to the saints within the limits of the diocese committed to his care. And it often happened that the faithful began and continued to pay homage to a saint without any intervention of episcopal authority. Nor was there much danger of abuse arising from this unauthorised veneration. The Church in these early days was a "little flock," and the saints honoured were exclusively martyrs who were publicly sentenced to death by the judges because they refused to deny the faith. It was but natural that their surviving brethren should pay them homage, piously visiting their last resting-places, decorating their tombs, celebrating the anniversary of their precious death, and begging their intercession with Almighty God. Ecclesiastical authority approved and encouraged this devotion, recognising in the action of the faithful a remote application of the principle, "*Vox populi vox Dei.*" At the same time the Church was not blind to the danger of error and abuse. To her is given the custody of the "deposit of faith," and, since God desires us to honour the saints, He gives the Church the right to test their sanctity. As early as the fourth century we find an example of her interposition and guidance. St. Optatus, in his history of the

Donatist heresy, tells us that at Carthage a Christian matron, named Lucilla, incurred the censures of the Church for having kissed the relics of a reputed martyr whose claims to martyrdom had not been juridically proved. In times of persecution, when imaginations are stirred and hearts are on fire, the Church has need of firmness to guard the purity of her liturgy and public worship against intemperate piety and zeal. The phrase "*Vindicare martyrem*" comes into current use at this period, and means that religious honour was not to be rendered to a reputed martyr unless it was declared legitimate by the Church.

In tracing the history of canonisation the one point that comes out most clearly is the care and prudence exercised by the Church in testing the holiness of the saints and regulating the cultus to be paid to them. St. Cyprian (died 258) recommends that the utmost diligence be observed in investigating the claims of those who are said to have died for the faith. All the circumstances accompanying the martyrdom were to be inquired into; the faith of those who suffered, and the motives that animated them were to be rigorously examined. We gather from his letters that the utmost caution was employed to prevent the recognition of undeserving persons.

When the Christians of those days, who were bound together by the closest ties of religion, found one of their number cast into prison or brought before the civil tribunal on account of the faith, they watched the proceedings with the liveliest interest. Mingling with the pagans without being recognised as Christians, they attended the trial even at the risk of their lives, and, having collected the questions and answers with scrupulous care, they committed them to writing on returning to their homes. Later on they were present at the place of execution, where they saw the last deeds and heard the dying words of the martyr. They thus became valuable witnesses as to the nature of his sacrifice and his claims to the honour of canonisation.

In the absence of such witnesses as these, there was another source from which authentic testimony was frequently obtained. The clerks of the law courts were approached, and leave was purchased, often at a very high figure, to take a copy of the records of the trial. The evidence, obtained from fellow-Christians or faithfully recorded by the public notaries, indicates the holy enthusiasm of the martyrs. Immediate entrance to the joys of heaven was the reward of their perseverance; and so vivid was their faith that they seemed, like St. Stephen, to see whilst still living

the radiance of Divine Glory. The most frightful tortures had no terror for them; they tore down imperial edicts, and flung back in the most fearless manner the taunts of their heathen judges. Thus, when Maximus, the Roman governor of Silicia, had ordered the eyes of St. Probus to be gouged out he said to his victim: "Thou continuest still to argue, but thou art condemned to eternal darkness." And the Saint replied: "Did you know the darkness in which your soul is plunged, you would see yourself much more miserable than I am." At another stage the governor said: "Heat bars of iron and apply them to his feet"; to which the Saint replied: "This fire is without heat; at least I feel none"; and when he ordered him to be scourged till his shoulders were flayed the martyr simply said: "All this does me no harm; invent something new, and you will see the power of God who strengthens me." * Records like these, preserved as they have been in large numbers by the Roman Government, the bitter enemy of Christianity, afford the most ample proof that the courage which animated the martyrs was inspired from on high. But whether the acts of the martyrs were obtained from the public records, or gathered from the evidence of private individuals, they

* Alban Butler, under "Tarachus."

were always submitted for examination to the bishop of the diocese in which the saint had suffered death.

St. Augustine (died 430) tells of the procedure which obtained in his day for the recognition of a martyr. The bishop of the diocese in which the martyrdom took place set up a Canonical Process for conducting the enquiry with the utmost severity. The acts of the Process were sent either to the Metropolitan or Primate, who carefully examined the cause, and, after consultation with the suffragan bishops, declared whether the defunct was worthy of the name of martyr and the honour of public worship.

It is well known that in the early Christian centuries martyrs were the only saints for whom religious honour was authorised by the Church, and martyrs only (with the Blessed Virgin Mary) are mentioned in the Canon of the Roman Mass. When the era of the martyrs came to a close in the Roman world special honour began to be paid to "Confessors"—to use the term which is consecrated by usage. In the earliest times this name was applied to persons who had courageously suffered imprisonment or torture for the faith without gaining the final crown of martyrdom. But later it came to have a wider meaning, and included those who confessed the Christian faith

in times of persecution, thus exposing themselves to danger and suffering, or who by a life of extraordinary virtue and merit gave glory to God and to Jesus Christ. Thus in the course of time the name came to have the technical meaning which it has at the present day, and it was applied to all canonised men who do not belong to a special class, such as Martyr, Apostle, Evangelist.

At the beginning of the fourth century public honours were given to the confessors, and St. Martin was among the first to receive from the Church a special office and feast. Religious honour was rendered soon after death to bishops who were renowned for learning and holiness, to apostolic men who had founded churches or had converted whole nations to the true faith, amongst whom our own St. Patrick holds premier rank; to illustrious doctors, such as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, who, by their writings, had shed lustre on the Church of God; to models of the hermitical or monastic life—St. Anthony, St. Benedict, and others; to pillar saints like St. Simon Stylites, to holy women like St. Genevieve.

There is no documentary evidence now extant to show that the Church, at all times, took up a well-defined *rôle* in regard to the cultus to be paid to confessors. The oldest hagiologists often describe at length the veneration in which they

were held, and its manifestations, without indicating the manner in which it began. And, although bishops frequently intervened to prevent the recognition of undeserving persons, they did not ordinarily take the initiative by an official declaration of sanctity. Even the acts, which in those earlier ages were regarded as equivalent to modern canonisation, such as erecting an altar over the sepulchre of the deceased servant of God, or transferring his remains from their first resting place to a tomb more fittingly adorned (the "*elevatio corporum*," as it was called), all these and similar acts were rather the outward expression of a cultus already existing than an ecclesiastical authorisation for rendering such honour.

But towards the beginning of the seventh century a change becomes noticeable in the discipline of the Church. The interposition of bishops becomes much more frequent, and their approval of the public worship of deceased servants of God assumes a more clear and definite form. Relics in the older sense of the word signified various objects placed on the venerated tombs of the deceased, and sanctified by contact with them, just as in our own day the pallium worn by an archbishop is first placed on the tomb of St. Peter. But the piety of the faithful, not content with relics in this sense of the word,

would have true remains—the real bodies of the deceased—transferred to altars upon which the Holy Sacrifice could be offered. These translations, which were very often accompanied by miraculous cures, could not take place without the sanction of the bishops, to whom it belonged to consecrate the altars, pronounce judgment on the authenticity of the remains, and authorise the public worship of the deceased servant of God.

For the due performance of these solemn acts previous examination was necessary, and the bishop should be satisfied regarding the holiness, the virtues, and the miracles of the deceased. A formal court of enquiry was not regularly held, but reliable information should be always forthcoming. The veneration thus sanctioned by the bishop was rarely extended beyond the limits of his diocese, but there are examples recorded of provincial and national councils making declarations of sanctity, and authorising public honours for those who were worthy.

It may seem strange that either bishops or provincial or national councils could decree canonisation, seeing that canonisation involves obligatory cultus by the universal Church, and calls into exercise the gift of infallibility. The answer is that such decrees were in effect equivalent to our modern beatification, and the cultus

extended only to the local territory over which the grantors held jurisdiction. There was no canonisation, in the proper sense of the word, unless with the consent of the Pope, implicit or explicit, the cultus was imposed by way of precept upon the entire Church.

Such was the discipline observed by the Church till near the end of the tenth century. At this period, however, a new and important change occurred. In the canonisation of saints, as in many other matters of discipline, a process of centralisation took place, and more serious and solemn issues were referred to the Holy See, the central authority in the Church. But the movement was of slow growth; and here too practice preceded law, for it is not until two centuries later that the right to beatify and canonise was reserved exclusively to the Holy See. The same dangers to the purity of public worship which first led to the intervention of the bishops called later, with the expansion of the Church, for the supreme guarantee of the judgment of the Pope. In France, it was revealed to St. Martin of Tours that a supposed martyr, much honoured in the diocese, had suffered death not for the faith but for his crimes. And in England Earl Waltheof, one of the noblemen put to death by William the Conqueror, was widely regarded as a martyr, and

miracles were said to have been worked at his tomb. But, on examining the growth and development of this reputation, it was reasonably suspected to be due, in great measure, to a strong national antipathy to the Norman invader. Places might be named in our own time and country which had almost a national reputation for miraculous cures, yet when these alleged wonders were submitted to the calm scrutiny of an ecclesiastical commission the judgment of the commission was found to differ widely from the popular verdict. It is well known, in fact, that local prejudices and sympathies often lend a colour to the judgment, and, through excessive zeal and religious enthusiasm, even a widespread popular sentiment may be found on careful enquiry to have a strong admixture of error. Considerations of this kind showed the wisdom of having recourse to the venerated authority of the Apostolic See to guard against all possible errors.

The first example of a solemn canonisation occurred in 993, when Pope John XV. decreed celestial honours to St. Udalric or Ulric, Bishop of Augsburg.* There is no exact record of the manner in which the evidence was collected that was submitted to the Pope, but the judgment of

* Some historians maintain that the first solemn canonisation was that of St. Swibert, by Pope Leo III., in 804.

his Holiness was founded on the information supplied regarding the holy life of the bishop and the miracles worked at his intercession ; and these are the two principal points to be examined in every canonisation. The second example of canonisation by the Pope was that of St. Simeon of Treves by Benedict VIII. in 1042.

In the meantime, however, bishops continued to canonise in their respective dioceses, and an instance of episcopal canonisation occurred as late as 1153. St. Peter Damien tells us that, in the eleventh century, bishops assembled in synod decreed the honours of canonisation for deceased servants of God, and that in some instances they acted as delegates of the Sovereign Pontiff.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries the course of the movement may be summed up in this manner. On the one hand the bishops always enjoyed the right of canonisation. But, on the other hand, they exercised this right less frequently ; greater care and rigour were observed in collecting information with a view to canonisation ; and gradually recourse was had with greater frequency to the more solemn and authoritative judgment of the Popes. Hence the decision of Pope Alexander III., taken in 1173, is to be regarded, not as an innovation, but rather as the natural development and culmination of the

practice existing during the previous two centuries. After reprimanding certain bishops for having permitted honour to be paid to a man who was far from being a saint, the Pope continues :— " You shall not therefore presume to honour him in the future ; for, even if miracles were worked through him, it is not lawful for you to venerate him as a saint without the authority of the Roman Church." * The procedure initiated by the text of Alexander III. was confirmed by a Bull of Innocent III. in the year 1200, issued on the occasion of the canonisation of St. Cunegonde.

From this date onwards the enquiries become more elaborate and intricate, the more lengthened examinations affording a better guarantee of truth. The original minutes of various investigations held during the twelfth, thirteenth, and following centuries are still preserved in the Roman archives. But space does not permit us to enter into details, and it must suffice to draw attention to some remarkable circumstances connected with the practice then followed.

Nowadays canonisation cannot take place without a dispensation until more than fifty years shall have elapsed since the death of the servant of God, but during the period under consideration canonisation often occurred very near the time

* De Reliq. et Vener. Sanctorum.

of death. Thus St. Francis of Assisi, who died on the 4th of October, 1226, was canonised on the 19th of July, 1228; St. Clare, who died on the 12th of August, 1253, was canonised on the 26th of September, 1255. The delay was still less in the case of St. Antony of Padua, who died on the 15th of June, 1231, and was canonised on the 3rd of June, 1232; whilst the most rapid canonisation of all was that of St. Peter of Castelnau, the first martyr of the Inquisition, who was put to death on the 15th of January, 1208, and for whom Innocent III. authorised religious honours on the 12th of March of the same year.

The witnesses in those days were generally eye-witnesses, who were actually acquainted with the holy personages, and who had seen the miracles attributed to their intercession. Before the invention of printing, documentary evidence was not abundant or easily procured, nor was it often necessary when canonisation followed so soon after death. The numbers of witnesses too were greater than at the present day; the depositions of over two hundred were taken in the province of Toulouse for the canonisation of St. Dominick.

Though the Pope might act in virtue of his office of Supreme Ruler he did not usually take action in cases of canonisation, except at the instance of letters from kings, bishops, and, to

some extent, under pressure of the public opinion of Christian communities. A survival of this attitude may be noticed at the present day, for the letter of the Postulator begging that the cause be opened in Rome is usually accompanied by petitions to the same effect from distinguished persons in Church and State. In the cause of Blessed Gabriel Possenti (beatified June, 1908), in addition to letters from archbishops, bishops, and others, petitions were sent by twenty-nine cardinals to the Holy Father for his beatification.

There was no substantial change in the mode of procedure until towards the end of the Middle Ages. It is particularly worthy of note that, up to this period, there was no distinction recognised between beatification and canonisation; beatification as now understood was not known, and the process culminated at once in formal canonisation. The terms "Beatus" and "Saint" were regarded as synonymous, and were both applied to a person who was the object of public and ecclesiastical honour.

But the examination became more strict and precise every day. Instead of one enquiry several were now held, and in each of them sentence was pronounced on the particular question at issue. These different enquiries were generally directed towards one end, and formed

the basis of the final definitive sentence. It was easy therefore to see the course that each case would pursue if no obstacle arose that was fatal to success. Moreover, the multiplicity of enquiries led gradually to the distinction between beatified persons and saints. The beatus came to mean one for whom religious honour was permitted by the Church without any formal declaration of his entry into Heaven. For the saint, however, public honour was not only permitted but enjoined on all the faithful, and the Church made an official pronouncement on his virtues and merits. There were two classes of beatified persons. The one class was already in possession of public honour, and the Church merely tolerated the existing veneration. By far the greater number of holy personages of ancient Christendom belonged to this class; and no action was taken by the Church to interfere with the cultus they received provided there was no serious abuse. The others were those whose veneration was authorised beforehand by a solemn decision of the Church.

A significant step forward was taken towards the end of the sixteenth century, when Sixtus V., by the Constitution "*Immensa Æterni Dei*," instituted the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The objects of the Congregation are to promote general

uniformity in the externals of divine worship, and to take charge of all the processes of beatification and canonisation. In the latter function the Congregation is extraordinary, and possesses Papal authority. The Council of Trent had already directed bishops and metropolitans to watch with anxious care all that was done regarding the invocation and veneration of saints, and the use of images and relics, and to guard against novelty and innovation.

It was found, however, that, despite the most jealous care, episcopal rules were disregarded, and instances of unwarranted cultus occurred now and again in various localities. But the Church is a living power, and, in virtue of the Divine promises, develops new energies to meet the growing needs of the times. The celebrated Decrees of Urban VIII., issued in 1625 and 1634, finally settled the question. By these decrees it was decided that, without the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, no religious cultus could be paid to any person recently deceased, however eminent for virtue or celebrated for miracles. After declaring clearly that it was unlawful to honour any person as a saint without the consent of the Roman See, Pope Urban adds that it was not his wish " to prejudice the case of those who were the objects of a cultus arising either out of

the general consent of the Church, or a custom of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary, or the writings of the Fathers, or the long and intentional tolerance of the Apostolic See or the Ordinary." With these important exceptions all cultus is now forbidden to a deceased person until the decree authorising it, which is in reality the decree of Beatification, is issued by the Holy See.

The exceptional causes mentioned in the Decrees of Urban constitute what is technically known as "The Excepted Case";* and all other causes are said to proceed by *way of non-cultus*. "A custom of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary" should be a custom reaching back one hundred years before the Decrees of Urban VIII. All causes therefore of persons of a later date than 1524, and also the causes of all those for whom cultus cannot be proved to have existed from that date, follow the procedure of non-cultus. And it is obvious that these two classes are so comprehensive that they comprise nearly all the causes which can be submitted for ecclesiastical enquiry.

The Constitutions of Urban VIII. lay down the entire form of procedure in causes of canonisation as it exists at the present day. Since the date of

* See chapter XI., page 209.

these decrees canonisation cannot take place unless beatification has been previously obtained, and the right of beatification as well as canonisation has been reserved exclusively to the Pope.

It is unnecessary to trace the history of canonisation any further. Some additional rules and slight modifications of existing regulations were introduced by Alexander VII., Innocent XI., and especially by Benedict XIV. (1675–1758), who was a master in this subject. But substantially there is no change in the procedure; and the history of canonisation from the days of Urban VIII. would be mainly a history of the individual causes examined. In the great work of Benedict XIV. about 2,070 causes are considered with reference to the cultus paid to them, or their claims to cultus from the Church. And the beatification of Venerable Teresa de St. Agostino and her companions, which was made on the 10th of June, 1906, was the one hundred and thirteenth beatification which took place after that of St. Francis of Sales in 1661.

CHAPTER III

Outline of the Procedure for Canonisation

In the present chapter it is proposed to give a general outline of the entire procedure for canonisation from the very beginning down to the final stage, when the Church solemnly places the deceased servant of God upon the roll or catalogue of saints. The various Processes, both Ordinary and Apostolic, held in the course of the enquiry, are so elaborate and loaded with so many formalities that there is some danger lest the mind occupied with these details should be diverted from the thoroughly rigorous and searching character of the investigations. These judicial solemnities, which have been preserved in all their ancient abundance, will be seen at length in the chapters on the Construction of Processes and on the Informative Process. To enumerate some of them :—all the witnesses are brought to a special session to be sworn, and they come a second time to give their evidence ; there is a multiplicity of oaths, even the Postulator having to swear that his intention in undertaking the cause

is upright and loyal; the transcription and comparison of documents are carried out under severe and minute formality, so that the sessions become most numerous and fatiguing; and no Process can be carried through without a number of dispensations and indults, as, for instance, in an Apostolic Process, that two judges be allowed to preside instead of four when the bishop or his vicar-general cannot be present. "On peut différer," says L'Abbé Boudinhon, "d'avis sur l'utilité de ces solennités judiciares d'un autre âge; il est permis de se demander si leur maintien intégral, l'abondance des écritures de pure forme, la multiplicité des serments, le luxe des signatures, de sceaux, d'attestations diverses, ne risque pas de détourner l'attention des veritables preuves."

There is no doubt, however, that the formalities of these enquiries, consecrated by ancient usage, are precautions taken to guard against all error and falsehood, and to ensure that the truth shall shine forth in all its brilliancy and splendour. The investigations are of the most searching character, extending over many years, and sometimes from century to century. The whole life of the reputed saint is subjected to the most minute and thorough enquiry, and this is especially true of his writings, his virtues, and his alleged miracles. The "fierce light which

beats upon a throne" is as nothing compared to this most careful and elaborate enquiry. The proceedings throughout are conducted with much greater care and formality than the most important suit at law. The history of secular jurisprudence can show us nothing approaching the extreme circumspection observed in these investigations. Numerous witnesses are examined, who must all have an intimate knowledge of the case, and at least some must possess a local and personal acquaintance with the facts. Expert witnesses are also called, and the whole evidence, which is generally of a voluminous character, is thoroughly sifted by able and impartial intellects. The judgment of one court is revised by another, and the final decision in all Processes is reserved to the Holy See. Thus the credibility of direct and reliable testimony is united to the authority of the most serious and competent judicial consideration.

The whole procedure in causes of beatification and canonisation, as it exists at the present day, is regulated by the Supreme Pontiff, the directions being contained chiefly in two Bulls issued by Urban VIII. and in subsequent decrees of the Holy See. In the public liturgy of the Church many different classes of saints are recognised, such as apostels, martyrs, confessors, widows,

virgins and others; but for our present purpose all these divisions may be included under the two heads of martyrs and confessors. In this sense the word *confessor* includes all saints who did not actually suffer martyrdom. In the causes of martyrs the crucial enquiry is whether the servant of God was a genuine martyr; for martyrdom has been always regarded as equivalent to the possession of heroic virtue. The method followed in the enquiry regarding martyrs differs somewhat from that regarding confessors, and may be seen at length in the chapter on Martyrs. There is question in the present chapter of Confessors only, for it is in the investigation of the claims of reputed confessors that the procedure of the Church is most perfectly displayed.

It is to be borne in mind then that the procedure has three distinct stages which correspond with the ecclesiastical terms Venerable, Blessed and Saint. The first stage comprises all the acts and enquiries of the Church from the very beginning down to the "Introduction of the Apostolic Process,"* when the Church makes the cause her own, and the servant of God may be styled Venerable. In the second stage are included all the Apostolic Processes from the signing of the Commission of Introduction to the

* See p. 41.

ceremony of Beatification. And during the third stage all the enquiries take place which are necessary in order that the Blessed one may receive the honour of canonisation.

Procedure till the Introduction of the Apostolic Process

As a general rule no official act connected with the procedure takes place until some time has elapsed from the death of the person whose canonisation is to be promoted. The reason of this inactivity is not far to seek. No steps are ever taken unless the deceased person enjoys a wide reputation for sanctity and miraculous power. And the Church fears that whilst the grave is still fresh the old adage " De mortuis nil nisi bonum " might be carried too far, and, suspecting the enthusiasm of the moment, she gives public opinion time to mature, and divest itself of bias and prejudice. The first step then, when a person has died in the odour of sanctity, is to identify the body and re-bury it in a place appointed by ecclesiastical authority. In order that this may be duly carried out the Postulator of the Cause,* having a Commission of Procuration signed by numbers of the clergy and people, approaches the

* See p. 50.

Ordinary of the diocese in which the reputed Confessor is buried and obtains from him authority for identification and re-burial. When this is obtained the deceased person enjoys the title of servant of God. Should the grave of the deceased be unknown or unapproachable these acts may be omitted by the indulgence of the Holy See, and the cause may proceed.

The Postulator of the Cause next petitions the Bishop to establish the Ordinary Informative Process* to enquire into the reputation for sanctity of life and the reputation for virtues and miracles enjoyed by the servant of God. There may be more than one Informative Process, if the witnesses to be examined are to be found in more than one diocese. When this is accomplished, or nearly so, the Postulator begs the Bishop, or a Roman official, to form the Process regarding non-cultus†—that is, as to whether the Bull of Urban VIII. has been hitherto scrupulously observed.

The acts or minutes of these two enquiries are sent to the Congregation of Rites, which Congregation possesses exclusive authority from the Holy Father in all matters pertaining to the beatification and canonisation of saints.

The Acts of these Processes having been duly

* See p. 80. † See p. 103.

conveyed to the Eternal City, the chief Postulator of the Cause, who resides in Rome, begs the Holy Father, through a petition drawn up by his Procurator, to direct the Bishops of those places where the writings of the servant of God are known to exist to make a close and diligent search for them. The Bishop, having obtained the delegation of the Sacred Congregation and the instructions of the Promoter of the Faith,* establishes a Process called the "Little Process of the Diligences," for the purpose of discovering and collecting the writings. All the works of the servant of God, printed or in manuscript, are sent to Rome, and most closely examined by Revisers deputed by the Cardinal Relator of the Cause, who is elected by the Supreme Pontiff. The object of this examination is to see if the writings contain any proposition contrary to faith or good morals or opposed to pure and sound doctrine. If the report is favourable a decree is issued to the effect that the cause may proceed further. It occasionally happens that by the permission of the Pope the search for the writings and the examination of them are deferred till after the Introduction of the Cause; but, except in a case of urgent necessity, the prudent Postulator, to save time and expense, will avoid

* See p. 58.

taking this course, for something may be found in the writings which would constitute a fatal obstacle to the success of the cause.

As soon as the decree on the writings has been issued, or, as sometimes happens, during the enquiry into the writings, the Postulator begs that the Acts of the Informative Process already sent to Rome be opened before the Sacred Congregation. The Acts of this Process are examined with the utmost care, and the Congregation finally pronounces sentence. If the judgment be favourable it is confirmed by the Pope, and the Holy Father signs the Commission of Introduction. The signing of this Commission is variously known as "The Introduction of the Cause" and "The Introduction of the Apostolic Process." The Introduction of the Cause indicates that a very important point has been reached in the procedure of canonisation, and it has been aptly compared to the finding of a grand jury under the law of England that there is ground for sending the case forward for trial.

Without a special Papal dispensation this commission is never signed till at least ten years have passed since the Acts of the Processes abovementioned were transmitted to the Congregation.* The servant of God may now be styled "Vener-

* See *Trama*, pp. 347, 348.

able," for the reputation for sanctity is judicially proved. This title does not imply that any religious honour may be paid to the deceased, all such honour being strictly forbidden until beatification takes place. When the Commission of Introduction is signed, Rome makes the cause its own ; and the Bishop, unless specially deputed by the Holy See, can no longer take part in the proceedings.

Besides those hitherto discussed there is another class of causes which is regarded as exceptional by the Bull of Urban VIII.* In these causes it must be juridically proved that a public cultus of immemorial antiquity was paid to the servant of God—that is to say, a cultus reaching back without interruption for a period of over 100 years before the publication of the Bull of Urban in 1625. The issuing of a favourable decree in causes of this kind is termed equipollent beatification, and entitles those servants of God to the same degree of veneration as the servants of God who are formally beatified. If these causes are continued, and canonisation is sought for, the same method of proof is observed as in other causes. But, as has been stated in the Process on Miracles, in order to obtain canonisation it must be shown that four miracles were

* See p. 209.

wrought since the decree of beatification by those servants of God who enjoyed cultus from time immemorial.

Procedure from the Introduction of the Cause till the Beatification

When the cause is introduced in Rome the next step is the appointment of a special court for enquiring into the reputation for sanctity and miracles in general. This Process* is formed by Apostolic authority in accordance with the instructions contained in the Remissorial Letter of the Pope and the Letter of the Promoter of the Faith. These letters are generally issued before the Congregation pronounces judgment on the question of non-cultus, this question being decided as a rule during the construction of the Process on the reputation. The Acts and minutes of the Process are duly transmitted to Rome, where they are discussed and examined with all the prescribed solemnity and a decree is issued in accordance with the merits of the case.

If the result is favourable to the Beatificandus, the Sacred Congregation next proceeds to deliver judgment on the validity of all the Processes,† both Ordinary and Apostolic, hitherto held.

* See p. 123. † See p. 173.

A Summary of these Processes is prepared by the Procurator; the Promoter of the Faith raises objections to which the Procurator replies, and finally the question is submitted for solution to a meeting of the Sacred Congregation. If the decree is favourable the way is now open for the new delegation on the individual virtues and miracles.

The Apostolic Process on the individual virtues and miracles* is the most important in its nature and working of all that have been formed up to this stage. It enquires most minutely into the real and inmost nature of all that has been deposed respecting the virtues and miracles of the servant of God. When there is danger lest the proofs in favour of the virtues and miracles should be lost, the Pope, by special dispensation, authorises the establishment of this Process immediately after the Introduction of the Cause. But the work which it has to accomplish at this early stage is strictly confined to the examination of the witnesses whose evidence would not be available in case of delay. This arrangement insures the attainment of the end for which the Process is established—namely, to obtain all possible evidence as to whether the servant of God possessed the theological virtues of Faith, Hope

* See p. 135.

and Charity, and also the Cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and those connected with them, in the heroic degree. The individual virtues and miracles are not proposed for discussion by the Congregation until fifty years after the death of the servant of God except in very rare cases of most remarkable sanctity. The question is finally considered before three distinct sessions of the Sacred Congregation, at the last of which the Pope himself is present. Having learned the nature of the previous discussions, and taken the votes of the Cardinals, he seeks to know the will of God by earnest prayer, and then pronounces judgment on the momentous question. It is to be noted that on each of the three days on which the question is discussed by the Sacred Congregation the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist is exposed for public adoration from nine o'clock till midday in the churches of the place where the servant of God lived and was buried.

As the possession of miraculous power must be proved at this stage it remains to say a word on the Apostolic Process regarding the miracles.* By the decree of Benedict XIV., 1741, it is required that at least two miracles must have been wrought through the intercession of the servant of God

* See p. 181.

before the decree for beatification can be issued. These miracles may be proved in the ordinary Informative Process, and by the Apostolic Process on the individual virtues and miracles, or by means of a special Apostolic Process on the miracles. If the latter course is adopted the Process is usually constructed where the miracles are alleged to have occurred, this place being selected on account of the greater facility thus afforded for producing the necessary witnesses and documentary evidence.

The evidence of medical experts is called into requisition if there is question of miraculous healing, and at the end the Acts are sent to Rome as in other Processes. The question is there discussed in three congregations just in the same manner as the question regarding the virtues. The Pope at length pronounces final judgment, and if the result is favourable he issues a decree that the beatification may take place on the appointed day. The servant of God, styled Venerable since the Introduction of the Cause, is after the Ceremony of Beatification entitled to be called Blessed.

Procedure from Beatification to Canonisation

Nothing can be done towards the Canonisation of the Blessed one until at least two miracles

have been wrought through his or her intercession since the beatification. The Postulator, being satisfied as to the existence of these miracles, petitions the Holy Father and begs that the cause be taken up once more. A new delegation is formed, and the proof of the new miracles is carried on with the same formalities and under the same rigorous conditions as in the case of the former miracles. The enquiry being complete and the Acts having been conveyed to the Sacred Congregation, all the forms are duly carried out which have been observed in the other Processes. Judgment is pronounced on the validity of the Process both as to its substance and form, a description of the miracles is prepared, the question of their existence and proof is proposed before three congregations, at the last of which the Pope is present; finally, the Supreme Pontiff pronounces sentence. Then, if the court is satisfied, judgment is given declaring that no doubt exists relative to the miracles in question, and stating that there is no reason why the canonisation should not be proceeded with. Lastly, the Pope issues the decree of canonisation, and the long-continued trial is at an end.

CHAPTER IV

The Construction of Processes for the Canonisation of Saints

The Processes, or Courts of Enquiry, in causes of canonisation are either Ordinary or Apostolic. The Ordinary Process is so called because it is formed by the authority of the Bishop or Ordinary of the diocese, and it enjoys the right to enquire into the reputation for virtues and miracles in causes of Confessors, or the reputation for martyrdom and miracles in causes of Martyrs. The Ordinary Process has also power to examine whether the decree of Urban VIII. regarding non-cultus has been observed, and also to enquire into the case excepted by the Bull of Urban VIII. if these investigations, as often happens, are held before the Introduction of the cause in Rome. The Apostolic Process is so called because it always derives its authority from the Supreme Pontiff. All the Processes held after the Introduction of the cause are Apostolic. When the Commission of Introduction is signed the Holy See is said to place its hand on the cause, and no one of inferior authority, not even the Bishop,

can afterwards take part in the proceedings except by special delegation from Rome. This rule is imperative, and was more strictly enforced by a new Papal Decree as recently as 1894. It was found that, after the first Episcopal Processes, Postulators sometimes sought further information from Bishops for the purpose of meeting difficulties raised by the Promoter of the Faith. And, as this practice was not in conformity with the common law of the Church, and might open the way to grave abuses, it was strictly forbidden by a decree of Pope Leo XIII. in 1894.

In processes of canonisation everything is reduced to an exact science. The legal procedure of civilized nations is based largely on the established methods of the Church. But nowhere else do we find the same severe regularity and strict discipline that are practised in these examinations. The utmost care and accuracy are observed at every stage, and, looking at the matter from the purely human point of view, it must be admitted that if there is any institution, any known method of investigation, capable of arriving at a full knowledge of the truth, the calm, deliberate procedure of the Church is eminently entitled to this distinction. The great object of all the enquiries, from beginning to end, is to avoid all possibility of error or deception, and to ensure

that the truth will shine forth in all its brilliancy and splendour. With this end in view the Church has ordained, under pain of invalidity, that the same person can never hold two offices of a different nature. No one who is a witness can ever become a Postulator either in the same or any subsequent Process of a particular cause. And the reason is clear. The Church desires to prevent all abuse, and if a Postulator, for example, became afterwards a Judge it is obvious that his impartiality might be open to suspicion.

In the formation of Processes, whether Ordinary or Apostolic, it is required by Canon Law that a number of officials be appointed to discharge the various duties. These officials are, chiefly, the Postulator of the cause, the Judges, the Fiscal Promoter or Promoter of the Faith and Sub-Promoters, Notaries, Messengers, Witnesses, Secretaries, and the Bearer.

The Postulator

The Postulator is the official who promotes the cause and expedites all the proceedings. He is said to be a general Postulator when appointed by the head of a religious order, according to the constitutions of the order, to promote the causes of any of its members who may have died in the odour

of sanctity. A special Postulator is one who is nominated to promote a particular cause, and he must be deputed by the person or persons who undertake to devote attention to the cause and supply expenses, whether they are private individuals, or a body of priests, or a religious sodality of which the deceased was a member. In order that the Postulator may act in a recognised legal manner he must receive a mandate or commission of Procuration, confirmed by the Bishop of the diocese, giving him the requisite faculties, and amongst others the power to substitute Vicars or Vice-Postulators in his stead.

When there is question of causes already introduced in Rome there must be one principal Postulator who has his residence in the Eternal City. The Vice-Postulators must be elected by him, and no one can act validly who is otherwise deputed. The term Postulator is generally applied to the Vice-Postulators when they are actively engaged in the promotion of the cause, and the word Procurator is often used in the same sense. The context sufficiently indicates the meaning, but, strictly speaking, the Procurator is an expert official appointed by the Chief Postulator in Rome to deal with the cause before the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and to prepare

petitions for obtaining the necessary rescripts and decrees.*

Before any Process in the cause is actually begun the Postulator must take an oath, technically known as *the oath of calumny*, by which he solemnly swears that he considers the cause just, and that he has undertaken it from zeal for the honour and glory of God.

The Postulator occupies a most important position in causes of canonisation. He is, under God, the prime mover in the whole undertaking. His duties are manifold and arduous, and his services, as will be seen, are required from beginning to end. He must, at the very beginning, be possessed of such information regarding the life of the servant of God, respecting his virtues, gifts and miracles, that he can reasonably conclude that the cause may be submitted to the judgment of the Congregation with a fair prospect of success. Hence he must be in a position to prepare statements and articles concerning the miraculous gifts of the servant of God and the possession of virtue in the heroic degree; and he must be capable of supplying abundant evidence in proof of his assertions. And in particular he is required to give a full account of the origin of the person in question, his native country,

* *Trama*, p. 229, note 2.

his parents, his youth and adult years ; of the state of life he selected ; of his spiritual exercises, endowments, and studies, with all the circumstances of time and place ; how the servant of God lived in a most praiseworthy manner, faithfully discharging the duties of his state in life, and practising exercises of piety and devotion to the end of his days.

It sometimes happens that the same person who is Postulator in the early stages is selected after the Introduction of the cause to be Postulator in the Apostolic Processes. In these circumstances he is assisted by an Advocate of the Curia who defends the cause before the tribunal of the Congregation.

The Judges

Judges are either Ordinary or Apostolic. The Ordinary Judge is he who by virtue of his office and ordinary authority exercises jurisdiction ; and therefore the Bishop is Judge in his own diocese, and has the right to form the ordinary Process and act alone as Judge. The same privilege is enjoyed by Vicars Apostolic, and Administrators of a diocese, also, when the see is vacant, by the Vicar-Capitular. The Vicar-General, though regarded in Canon Law as the Ordinary, cannot by virtue of his office form the Ordinary Process or exercise

the functions of Judge in causes of canonisation. If the Bishop, through some legitimate cause, cannot act he may depute the Vicar-General or some other dignitary to take up the duties in his stead; but in this case the deputy must have two assistant Judges, the one a graduate in Canon Law and the other a Master in Theology. If the Bishop appoints another Bishop to act in his place the delegated Bishop requires no assistant Judges, for a Bishop, in the language of the Church, is said to be the acme of dignity.* The Ordinary Judge can always discharge judicial duties in the Informative Process and also in the Processes regarding non-cultus and the Excepted Case† when these are formed before the Introduction of the Cause. But, after the Commission of Introduction is signed by the Pope, no Ordinary can act as Judge unless delegated by the Holy See.

Apostolic Judges are those who are commissioned by the Holy See. The number required, the authority to sub-delegate, and their powers generally are regulated altogether by the terms of the Remissorial Letter through which they receive their delegation. As a general rule the Bishop of the Diocese, the Vicar-General and four dignitaries or Canons are nominated, with the clause added that where the Bishop is the pre-

* *Fornari*, note 22. † See p. 209.

siding Judge he can act validly with only one of the dignitaries or Canons; when the Vicar-General takes the place of Judge he must have two dignitaries or Canons, and if both the Bishop and Vicar-General are legitimately impeded the four dignitaries or Canons can act conjointly. If the Process is held in a place where no dignitaries are available, members of the clergy who are not dignitaries may, by Papal delegation, be empowered to act as Judges. Other concessions are made when there is real necessity, but the rigorous character of the judicial office is always strictly safeguarded. No layman can ever act as Judge; and the Pope is Supreme Judge in all causes of canonisation.

In all Processes the Judges, in presence of the other members of the Court, bind themselves by oath to the faithful discharge of their judicial duties and the due observance of secrets; and these solemn obligations are imposed under the penalty of perjury and excommunication reserved to the Pope. Cardinals and Bishops take the oath standing and touching the breast, others on bended knees and touching the book of the Holy Gospels. At the proper time they receive the oaths of the Postulator, of the witnesses, and of all the officials who are to be sworn.

The quality which, above all others, should

adorn a judge is strict impartiality, and in the momentous business of the canonisation of saints this characteristic should be supreme. The law of the Church prescribes all the precautions that are humanly possible for the careful investigation of the truth, and the Judges are strictly bound to carry out these provisions to the letter. They can perform no judicial act except in the presence of the Promoter of the Faith,* whose duty it is to detect and point out all irregularities. The general decrees direct that the witnesses be sworn and their evidence taken in a church or oratory, or some place set apart for a religious purpose, in order that the sacred character of the surroundings should deter them more and more from the violation of their oath. And, except in case of grave necessity, such as severe illness, if a witness is sworn or examined elsewhere the evidence is inadmissible. Besides the witnesses produced by the Postulator the Judges are bound, under pain of invalidity, to examine independent witnesses, but the duty of calling them is by custom carried out by the Procurator Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith. Then again it is the duty of the Judges to examine any witnesses whom they know to be unfavourable to the cause, in order that the whole truth may

* See p. 58.

be known. They must take all possible care and diligence to see that the witnesses are faithfully examined and that they give their evidence in the vernacular in full length and completeness.

The Acts of each Session must be signed at the end of the Session by the Judges present, otherwise the Session is regarded as null and void.

When the Process is complete the Judges must write to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation stating what weight in their opinion is to be attached to the evidence. These statements are of very high importance. If they consider the evidence true they must say so in express terms. Should a witness contradict himself the Judges should say whether, in their opinion, the discrepancy was to be attributed to malice or to weakness of memory. They are to make known whether any witness was to be suspected, whether any witness was so rude and uncultivated as to think he could pay homage to the servant of God by exceeding the bounds of truth in his favour. In a word, the Judges should state all the facts which would help to throw additional light on the enquiry. These letters are regarded as official, and they are secretly preserved in Rome with the records of the Process.

Other duties of the Judges will appear in the description of the various Processes. It may be

observed here that the Judges are unique in this respect that they are the only officials who receive no payment for their work.

The Fiscal Promoter

The Fiscal Promoter fills a position of very grave responsibility. He is the agent of the Crown, the representative of ecclesiastical authority. And in all Processes for the canonisation of saints the Church must be officially represented. But the name of this representative varies in different Processes. When engaged in Episcopal Processes his title is the Fiscal or Fiscal Promoter, and in Apostolic Processes he is officially known as the Promoter of the Faith. His duties both in Episcopal and Apostolic Processes are substantially the same; but, when engaged in a Process constructed by episcopal authority, he is forbidden, by a decree issued in 1893, to assume the title of Promoter of the Faith, this title being confined to those, and those only, who represent the Church in Apostolic Processes.* In Episcopal Processes there is, as a rule, only one Promoter Fiscal, who is delegated by the Bishop; but in Apostolic Processes there is a Promoter of the Faith residing

* It is interesting to note that in Scotland the Public Prosecutor is known as the Fiscal, a name borrowed from the language of the Church.

in Rome who enjoys and exercises the right to depute two Sub-Promoters to assist him.

There is perhaps no official connected with causes of canonisation so well known to the public as the Promoter Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith. In popular language he is designated the "*advocatus diaboli*," or "devil's advocate," a name that has passed into current use in most languages, and is frequently applied to a person who adopts a destructive attitude towards any scheme or project. The somewhat frivolous appellation took its origin from a rough method of reasoning. The Postulator of the cause and the Promoter of the Faith are on opposite sides, and hence the Promoter of the Faith came to be regarded as the adversary of the saint. But the prime adversary of saints and of sanctity is the devil, and it was but another step to look upon the Promoter of the Faith as his advocate.

Coming to the important duties of this official, it must not be supposed that his sole occupation is to impede the progress of the cause in which he is engaged. He is a public minister duly appointed by the Church, and the reason of his existence is to ensure that none except those who are worthy will receive religious honour and veneration. In a general way his duties are to see that all the forms of law are carefully observed

throughout the course of the Process, to point out any errors or weak points that may appear in the evidence, and raise all possible objections that the whole truth may be discovered and all the facts shown up in their true light. Not only can there be no valid Process without him, but he must be present at every session of the Process, otherwise the session would be null and void, and he has the right to intervene in every single act of the Process.

And, according to the Decrees of Urban VIII. instituting the office of Fiscal Promoter, it is a part of his duties to draw up the Interrogatories and set them in order from the Articles supplied to him by the Postulator of the Cause. The terms "Articles" and "Interrogatories" are of frequent occurrence in works on the canonisation of saints, and it may be well to explain their meaning before proceeding further. By the word Articles is meant a simple statement of the facts connected with the life and works of the servant of God which the Postulator of the cause intends to prove before the Process. They correspond with the pleadings in our law courts, and are generally written in Latin; but, in order to be understood, they may be also given in the native language of the witnesses. An example will make the matter clearer.

The Postulator states and intends to prove, regarding the birth, native land, and the early youth of the servant of God, how far it is true that " the servant of God was born in....., in the diocese of....., on the.....day of the month of....., in the year....., of pious and respectable parents, ...and ....., whose first care was that the infant should be regenerated by the waters of Baptism on the day....., in the Church of ....., and should receive the name ..... The parents endeavoured, with enlightened care, to instil from the cradle into the heart of the child lofty sentiments of piety and religion. At a suitable age the child was strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and proved responsive to the pious teaching of his parents. All of which will be proved by competent witnesses, who have derived their knowledge from what they have seen or heard; and the same is certain from tradition and reputation, and it is public and notorious." All the Articles are written in a similar manner, and the number varies with the number of acts to be proved, with the virtues, miracles and supernatural gifts of the servant of God. The Articles are the foundation of the whole process, and the greatest care must be taken to secure accuracy.

The Interrogatories are the questions upon which the witnesses are to be examined. They are based upon the Articles, and must be drawn up so as to avoid carefully what is known in the legal practice of this country as leading questions, or questions which suggest the answer that is expected. Suggestion is strictly prohibited in criminal causes ; and causes of canonisation are in this respect on a par with criminal causes. An example of a leading question or suggestion would be—" Did the servant of God on such a day [naming the exact time] take a vow of chastity ? " " When commanded by his Superior to do such a thing did he give this reply [stating the reply] ? " Instead of assuming such forms the questions should be general. For example, did the servant of God take any vows ? Was he or she obedient ? The Interrogatories are kept carefully closed and sealed by the seal of the Judges, nor should they be ever opened except during the examination, and in presence of the Procurator Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith.

By long-established custom it belongs to the Procurator Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith to call official witnesses—that is to say, at least two independent witnesses besides those selected by the Postulator of the cause. He also calls hostile witnesses, if any such are known to exist ; and both

classes of witnesses have to be called under pain of invalidity. Usage has also sanctioned that the Procurator or Promoter should be the examiner of the witnesses in all Processes.

Like the Judges, this official is sworn to the faithful discharge of his duties and the religious observance of secrets. Nor has he satisfied his obligations until the acts of the Process are carefully revised and a faithful copy has been made, which must be compared with the original. The copy is sent to the Congregation, and the original report of the proceedings is sealed and preserved in the Episcopal archives. At the close of the Process the Fiscal Procurator or Sub-Promoter writes a letter to the chief Promoter of the Faith residing in Rome stating what weight is in his opinion to be attached to the evidence adduced in the course of the enquiry. This letter is afterwards made use of when the Process is opened before the Congregation.

The Notaries

In all Processes for canonisation it is absolutely necessary that there should be a Notary. He is appointed by Episcopal or Apostolic authority, according to the nature of the Process; and the office may be filled by a competent layman,

provided that he is duly appointed by ecclesiastical authority. In reality there are two Notaries, but the duty of the first is confined to the first session of the Process, and consists in recording that the second was duly elected and took the requisite oath. The term Notary always refers to the second official unless the contrary is clearly indicated.

The duties of this official, who is sometimes called the Actuary, are to write in the Latin language a faithful account of all the acts and minutes of the Process, and to take down with his own hand, under pain of invalidity, all the depositions of witnesses at the dictation of the Judge or Promoter of the Faith. If the evidence presented is documentary he must prepare a copy, which is to be compared with the original, in the presence of the Judge or Fiscal. It belongs to his office to see that all the witnesses sign their depositions, and that the proceedings of each session are signed by the Judges, by the Fiscal or Promoter, and by himself. The Interrogatories of the Fiscal and the depositions of witnesses are sealed by the Judges and given into the custody of the Actuary. The signature and seal of the Actuary give authenticity to every act of the Process.

This officer is sworn like the others, and it is

of the highest importance that his work should be performed with the utmost care. By a special Decree of Pope Clement XII., if the servant of God is a Religious, the Notary, in enquiries regarding his reputation for sanctity of life, can never be taken from the same Order of which the deceased servant was a member. This precaution has been adopted to ensure perfect accuracy and impartiality.

The Messengers

There may be one or more messengers in these courts, and they are expected to execute faithfully the commands of the Judges. Their chief duty is to summon the witnesses, to notify to the Procurator Fiscal or the Promoter, and to the witnesses, the day and hour at which they are to appear before the Tribunal; also to make known to the Judges that these citations have been issued. The office of Messenger in these courts is regarded as honourable, and is often held by clerics or by members of noble families. Messengers are sworn to the loyal discharge of their duties.

The Witnesses

There are three classes of witnesses. The *ordinary witnesses*, called by the Postulator of the

cause for the purpose of proving his own statements and articles. The *official witnesses*, who are called by the Judges or, according to the custom now generally received, by the Procurator Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith. At least two official witnesses must be summoned under pain of invalidity in every Process to confirm or weaken the other testimony, according as the exigencies of truth demand. And should it be known to the Judges in any way that there are witnesses who are unfavourable to the success of the cause these witnesses must be also officially summoned by the Judges, otherwise most serious, and sometimes fatal, difficulties would follow. Thirdly, there are *confirmatory witnesses*—that is to say, those who are named by other witnesses in the course of their evidence as well informed in the subject-matter of their testimony. These witnesses are produced by the Judges or by the representative of the Crown.

Witnesses may be either men or women, and they are all solemnly sworn to tell the whole truth and to observe the law of secrecy in regard to the questions and answers until the close of the Process. Those who give false evidence, or conceal the truth, or violate the obligation of secrecy, are guilty of perjury, and incur excommunication reserved to the Pope. Cardinals and

Bishops take the oath standing and touching their breasts; all other witnesses are sworn whilst genuflecting and touching the Holy Gospels. All the witnesses sign their names to the oath they have taken.

In giving their evidence witnesses must take the utmost care to tell all they know, whether this is in favour, or to the detriment, of the success of the cause. They should state the facts with all the circumstances, and should indicate clearly the source of their information—namely, whether they themselves saw the occurrences they narrate, whether they heard of them directly from those who were eye-witnesses, whether they derived their information from reading, or whether the facts were notorious, or, at least, matters of common knowledge. They should use clear, simple language; and the utmost latitude is allowed to them for correcting their evidence, so that all doubt and difficulty may be removed and the exact truth elicited. If in the course of the examination they should happen to forget anything which they may afterwards call to mind, they are bound to make this known to the Judge or to the Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith, even if the Process is already closed.

The witnesses are examined, first of all, on the Interrogatories* prepared by the Procurator or

* See p. 60.

Promoter, and a simple *Yes* or *No*, without addition of any kind, is never taken for an answer. Such a reply is regarded as useless, and the witnesses must state the facts fully and minutely according to their knowledge. Before the examination on the facts of the case is begun some general questions are proposed. In the first place—and this is an admonition rather than a question—the witness is reminded of the binding force of an oath, the obligation of speaking the truth, and the gravity of the sin of perjury. He is next asked his name, the names of his parents, his age, his place of birth, his profession or occupation in life. Then he is interrogated as to whether he performs every year the duties of annual confession and communion, whether he was ever accused or convicted of crime, whether he ever incurred ecclesiastical censure, whether he was instructed by anyone in regard to the manner in which he was to give his evidence, whether he is actuated by human motives or by zeal for the glory of God, whether he was personally acquainted with the servant of God, whether he heard of him, and from whom, or read of him, and who was the author of the book or writing; finally, whether he is moved by any strong friendship or devotion towards the servant of God, and whether he particularly desires his beatification.

When all these questions are answered, the witness is examined at full length on all the Interrogatories prepared by the Procurator or Promoter, next on the statements and Articles drawn up by the Postulator of the cause. The examiner in both instances, according to the custom now established, is the Procurator Fiscal or Promoter of the Faith. In order that the examination be legitimately carried out each of the witnesses should be examined on all the Interrogatories ; but it is not necessary that the witnesses be examined on all the Articles, it suffices that they give evidence regarding those Articles upon which they have been summoned to bear testimony.

At the end of each session the witness signs his evidence ; and if the witness is unable to write he makes his mark in the form of a cross, the Actuary testifying that this is the mark of the witness. It is customary, too, that before signing the Actuary should read out in a clear, intelligible voice the depositions of the witness, and that the witness should be afforded facilities for adding to or subtracting from the evidence, according as may be necessary in the interests of truth. If an interpreter is required he is selected by the Judges, and he is sworn to observe secrecy and to do his work faithfully.

In the quest of truth, especially in causes of canonisation, it is obviously of supreme importance that the witnesses should state the facts clearly and fully, and no precaution is omitted which would help them to give their evidence with the utmost accuracy and precision.

If it is asked how many witnesses are actually required in these enquiries the answer must be that the number varies in different circumstances. It is a general rule, however, that no Process is valid in which at least eight or ten witnesses have not been examined, of which two must be official witnesses. With this limitation the question is left in great measure to the judgment and discretion of the Postulator of the cause. To save unnecessary expense, and prevent the accumulation of irrelevant and useless evidence, it is expected that the number would not be immoderate and excessive. But in the Informative Process for proving the reputation for sanctity and miracles it is congruous that a larger number of witnesses should be produced than in subsequent Processes; and from the very fact that it is held at a date nearer the time of death of the servant of God, a larger number is available in this Process. If but few witnesses can be produced in the Informative Process, the number must be still smaller in succeeding ones, and thus the ultimate success

of the cause must be doubtful. When there is question of those servants of God who had led retired and solitary lives remote from society it is always difficult to produce abundant evidence; and this very difficulty is the reason why many hermits and solitaries, who had led lives of extraordinary holiness, have never been enrolled in the catalogue of saints. On the other hand, if the deceased person had lived in a large city the number of witnesses required to prove the reputation is much greater than for one who had lived in a less populous district, for reputation is a relative term and varies with the population. But it is to be borne in mind that, at all times, the authority and prudence of the witnesses examined must compensate to a large extent for deficiency in numbers. The eminent Judge, Lord Chief Baron Palles, was examined recently in the cause of Venerable Oliver Plunkett,* and it is evident that the testimony of such a witness must be regarded as of the utmost importance. But, making due allowance for all these considerations, it is a general principle, laid down by the ablest writers on this subject, that the proof of the reputation for sanctity would be regarded as weak and imperfect if it was not solemnly attested by at least thirty witnesses. This is a most

* See p. 227.

remarkable statement, and nothing can illustrate more forcibly the extreme care and diligence with which all human means are availed of to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

The Secretaries

The chief duties of the Secretaries are to make a faithful copy of the minutes and acts of the Process for transmission to the Congregation of Rites. The Secretaries are sworn to the faithful discharge of their duties. As a rule the minutes are transcribed when the Process is complete and the obligation of secrecy ceases; but if there is reason for more prompt action parts of the minutes may be handed over for transcription before the enquiry is finished. In this case the Secretaries are sworn to secrecy. The Secretaries are sometimes deputed in the course of the Process to make faithful copies of documents preserved in archives or libraries.

The Bearer

The official deputed to bring the Acts and minutes of the Process to the Sacred Congregation in Rome is called the Bearer. The Bearer binds himself by oath to take the copy of the minutes to

Rome and present it with due formality to the Congregation. He receives this copy, which must be in manuscript, from the Actuary in presence of the Judges, together with the official instrument declaring the Process closed, the letter of the Judges and that of the Fiscal Promoter or Sub-Promoter of the Faith. All these documents are most carefully closed and sealed. On reaching Rome the Bearer approaches the Secretary of the Congregation, and a day is appointed upon which he hands over the documents entrusted to his charge. And the Chancellor of the Congregation inspects the documents carefully in presence of the Secretary, and, having been satisfied that the presentation is duly made, the duties of the Bearer are at an end. It is the authenticated copy that is always sent to Rome, the official minutes being preserved in the archives of the Bishop in whose diocese the Process was held. By adopting this course all difficulties are obviated, for, if any doubt should arise as to the authenticity of any part of the transcript, recourse can at once be had to the original, and the matter can thus be definitely settled.

* * * *

So much having been said regarding the various officials and their duties, it remains to draw

attention to a few other points relating to the construction of the Processes.

If any official dies in the course of the enquiry, or becomes incapacitated for his work, a successor must be appointed by a new commission or delegation. The privilege of filling the vacancy belongs to the same authority that enjoyed the right of making the original appointment. It is customary to fix a time limit, say of one, two, or more years, within which the work of the Process should be brought to a close. Any work done after the fixed term has expired is absolutely null and void. The limit is settled by the Bishop in Ordinary Processes, and by the Remissorial Letter of the Pope in Apostolic Processes. And it is the duty of the Postulator to watch carefully lest the time limit be exceeded, and, if necessary, petition for a prorogation or prolongation from the proper authority.

The Judges, the Fiscal Promoter, and the Actuary undertake a most responsible task in these examinations. And they are expected to display the greatest diligence and zeal, knowing that they are working for the glory of God and the exaltation of the Church. They must go neither too fast nor too slow, avoiding undue haste lest the work should be imperfectly done, and unnecessary slowness on the other hand, for expenses are

accumulated and other inconveniences incurred if the enquiry is excessively prolonged.*

The oath administered to the officials varies with the different offices, and the form of oath taken may be found in text-books officially recognised as guides for Postulators. All these oaths bind as a matter of course under the penalty of perjury. But where the law of secrecy is superadded this obligation of secrecy binds under pain of excommunication, from which only the Pope himself, to the exclusion even of the Major Penitentiary, can absolve except in the case of danger of death.

There is scarcely any possible difficulty for which ample provision is not made in the Decrees of the Church. But should any unforeseen obstacle arise, as, for example, strong evidence against the success of the cause, then all further enquiry is to be suspended until recourse is had to the Holy See for direction.

All dignitaries, canons, beneficiaries and others bound to attend in choir are dispensed from all choral duties whilst engaged in these causes. At the same time they enjoy the choir privileges and receive the usual emoluments just as if they were actually present at the duties.

When the enquiry is complete and the minutes

* See *Trama*, p. 338.

have been transmitted to Rome the next step is the opening of the Process for final decision before the Congregation of Rites. If the evidence is in any language except Latin or Italian, Translators and Revisors must first be appointed. In 1889 a decree was issued by Pope Leo XIII. in this connection. To prevent irregularity His Holiness called attention to a rule of Urban VIII. by which Translators and Revisors were to be elected and deputed by the Cardinal Relator of the cause, and in no circumstances by the Judges of the Process. The Cardinal Relator, as the name implies, is the official selected by the Pope to relate or submit to the Congregation the Acts of the Process. The same decree directs that the autograph minutes of the Process, closed and sealed, be preserved in the episcopal archives, and that only one other copy be made, which must be in manuscript, and not printed, typewritten, or in any other form. This copy must be sent, closed and sealed, to Rome, and must not be opened without the permission of the Pope. It was also decreed that a special kind of durable paper be used lest the writing should become illegible in the course of time.

Then, if there is question of the Ordinary Process constructed with the view of obtaining the Introduction of the Cause, the procedure in

Rome is briefly as follows :—As has been stated already, the Commission of Introduction is not signed except by special dispensation until ten years have elapsed since the Process was presented to the Congregation. This dispensation is readily granted, when, on account of the advanced age of the witnesses in the Ordinary Process, it would be morally impossible for them to be re-examined in the Apostolic Process if a period of ten years were allowed to intervene. It is also given without difficulty when a long period of time has passed between the death of the servant of God and the establishment of the Ordinary Process. The object of the decennial law is to guard against bias and prejudice, to save witnesses from the danger of having their evidence tainted by strong feeling if they are examined soon after the death of the servant of God, when his reputation for holiness is most intense. And in the cases mentioned this danger is remote, and there is strong reason for the dispensation.

The question of date having been settled, the Ordinary Process is opened in the Eternal City ; and the Cardinal Relator of the cause having been appointed, the Procurator prepares an Information which he hands with a summary of the Process to the Sub-Promoter of the Faith, who lodges his objections to the Petition to which the Procurator

is bound to reply. The cause is then considered in an ordinary Congregation, if the Pope gives permission—otherwise in a general Congregation. If the Congregation is favourable, the final petition or commission is prepared to be signed by the Holy Father. This petition is drawn up by the Procurator and given to the Promoter of the Faith, who may make some alterations, after which he testifies at the foot that he has seen the document. The Secretary of the Congregation bears it to the Supreme Pontiff, who, if he approves it, signs it with the word PLACET, adding the first letter of his baptismal name, not that of his pontificate. This supplication or petition, granted and signed by the Pope, is called the Commission of Introduction, and authorises the Sacred Congregation to proceed with the cause.

To obtain the signing of this Commission memorials and petitions of a spontaneous and urgent nature are sent to the Holy Father by kings, princes and persons of distinction in Church and State. Amongst such distinguished persons are Kings-regent, Presidents, Governors, Councillors of State; and in the Church, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Cathedral and Collegiate Chapters, Heads of Ecclesiastical Seminaries, Dignitaries, Religious Orders and their Superiors General. The Church rarely takes

action until petitioned in this way; and the memorials should give expression to the remarkable reputation for sanctity or martyrdom and miracles enjoyed by the deceased servant of God, and the widespread holy desire that the Supreme Pontiff would place him on the venerated roll of the saints.

The procedure in Rome for Apostolic Processes is substantially the same as that just described for the Ordinary Process, and is given in detail in the chapter explaining the work of the Process on the Reputation in general

CHAPTER V

The Ordinary Informative Process

In this chapter it is proposed to describe fully the mode of procedure observed in the Ordinary Informative Process, and to explain in detail the work of the various sessions; and, for the purpose of this explanation, it is assumed that, according to the custom now generally received, the Process is carried out with all the ceremonial and formality prescribed for all subsequent Processes. The full description here given will save repetition in explaining the other Processes, and it will be sufficient, as a rule, to indicate, with regard to these Processes, important points of difference in procedure, and to set forth the special work assigned to them by recognised usage and enactment.

The series of examinations for the Beatification and Canonisation of servants of God begins with the Ordinary Informative Process. This Process is the first judicial act which takes place in causes of canonisation. It is called "Ordinary," because it is established by the Bishop, who is by the usage of Canon Law called the Ordinary of the

diocese. The Bishop derives his authority in this matter from the Council of Trent, from the Common Law of the Church, and from custom. The Vicar-General, though entitled to the name of Ordinary, has no authority by virtue of his office to construct this Process.* The Process is called "Informative" to distinguish it from the other two Processes which Bishops have the right to construct,† and especially because its object is to supply *information* to the Holy See regarding the reputation for sanctity of life and for virtues and miracles enjoyed by the servant of God.

Mention is first made of the Ordinary Process in the petition for the canonisation of St. Raymund of Pennafort, died 1275, but at this early date the Process did not possess full judicial authority. In 1634 Urban VIII., in a special Brief confirming his general decrees, ordained that in future no cause of canonisation should be undertaken by the Holy See unless the Informative Enquiry was first carried out. From that date, therefore, it is the fixed usage of the Church that the Informative Process should be regularly held in all causes of canonisation.

For the valid construction of this Process it is sufficient that those formalities are observed which are required by Canon Law for ordinary

* See p. 53. † See p. 105 and p 116

courts of enquiry held by Bishops. But it is most congruous and desirable that the Ordinary should carry out all the formalities which are observed in Apostolic Processes of Canonisation, both because of the grave nature of the matter in question, and because, when thus solemnly constructed, this Process takes equal rank with the Apostolic Process as regards the nature and weight of the evidence given before it. All these solemnities are set forth in this chapter, and the prudent Postulator will take care that they are carefully adhered to in practice.

Although the great object of this Process, as has been stated above, is to supply information to the Holy See regarding the reputation for virtues and miracles enjoyed by the servant of God, it is nevertheless most important that not only the general reputation should be proved, but that the individual virtues and miracles should be examined before the Court, and, if possible, established by evidence. For, according to the usual practice of the Holy See, no enquiry is now instituted in Rome regarding the individual heroic virtues until the Ordinary and Apostolic Processes on the reputation for sanctity have been held and their joint evidence combined for examination. Moreover, those who give evidence in the Informative Process are for the most part

eye-witnesses, and, being possessed of more complete and accurate knowledge, their testimony must carry greater weight, and there is a better opportunity at this early stage for the solution of all possible difficulties. And, as a considerable time must elapse before the Apostolic Process concerning the individual virtues and miracles can be established, many of the witnesses may have died or left the place in the meantime, so that their evidence is no longer available. And if a number of witnesses give testimony of a reputed miracle in the Ordinary Process, and this evidence is confirmed by the same or other eye-witnesses in the Apostolic Process, the combination of both will much more easily give complete and satisfactory proof of the miracle.

For these amongst other reasons it is of the highest importance that, in addition to the enquiry into the reputation for sanctity, an examination should also be held in the Informative Process regarding the individual virtues and miracles. It will be useful, therefore, to point out here the exact nature of this twofold enquiry—first, into the reputation for sanctity ; and second, into the specific virtues and miracles.

If it is asked, then, what is meant by the reputation for sanctity and miracles which forms the subject-matter of enquiry in the Informative

Process, the answer is that a mere rumour or current story devoid of authority is never sufficient; the report must be of a widespread character found to exist amongst the more prudent and responsible section of the community. To use the words of Benedict XIV., who is acknowledged to be a master on all questions of canonisation, this reputation is "nothing else than a judgment or common opinion regarding the purity and integrity of life, and the virtues, not rarely, but by continued acts when occasion arose, exercised above the ordinary mode of other virtuous men and women by some servant of God now deceased, also regarding miracles wrought through their intercession with God, so that devotion towards them having sprung up in one or more places they are invoked by many persons in their necessities, and, in the judgment of many men of weight and authority, they are considered worthy to be placed by the Apostolic See on the roll of saints or beatified persons."

The Informative Process makes enquiry into the reputation for sanctity of the servant of God during his life and after his death, and it also investigates the circumstances of his death.

In regard to his *reputation for sanctity during life*, it is asked what opinion on his sanctity was prevalent; was he regarded as a *saint* by pious

and worthy persons; was this opinion constant, and derived from the virtues and graces with which he was adorned by God; was he often called upon to relieve the misfortunes and troubles of others; did the populace pay him honour and respect; were there other signs of his repute for holiness.

As to his *reputation after death*, the Process enquires whether on account of his reputed sanctity he was buried in a distinct place apart from others; whether there was any notable inscription on his tomb; whether the faithful flocked in large numbers to his grave to implore his intercession; did they endeavour to obtain pictures and relics of the deceased, and did they consider him worthy of the honour of an Altar; did they regard him as a saint and think he would not be detained in the purifying flames of Purgatory; did they piously recall his good works and consider his intercession efficacious with God.

Then the Informative Process examines *the circumstances of his death*, and enquires whether from preceding, accompanying, and subsequent signs it was regarded as precious in the sight of the Lord. And in reference to *antecedent* signs, it is asked whether he predicted his approaching death and how; what was his last illness, and did he bear the pains of sickness joyfully and with

perfect submission to the Divine Will; was he obedient to the directions of his medical attendants; did he elicit remarkable acts of virtue in his last illness, and breathe forth fervent prayers to God; did he ask for the rites of the Church, and with what fervour did he receive the last Sacraments.

As to the signs of holiness *accompanying* his death, it is asked whether he was glad at the announcement of his approaching dissolution; whether he was inflamed with the desire of eternal life; whether he listened with joy to the prayers of the priest in attendance; whether he sustained a conflict with the evil one; whether he showed any other signs of extraordinary sanctity at this supreme moment.

In regard to *subsequent* signs of holiness, it is asked whether immediately after death the report went round that a saintly person had departed this life; whether the people in large numbers attended the obsequies; whether there was any special manifestation of honour towards him, and what was its nature; whether there was any miraculous event by which God marked the sanctity of His servant.

The reputation for sanctity must be borne out by intelligent and trustworthy witnesses who are intimately acquainted with the life of the servant

of God in its various stages, and who are capable of forming a reliable judgment on the prevailing opinion regarding his sanctity and miracles. The Introduction of the Apostolic Process will be sought for in vain if the reputation for sanctity and miracles is not proved beyond all possibility of doubt, and, as a general principle, the proof would be regarded as weak and imperfect if not solemnly attested by at least thirty witnesses.

In dealing with the duties of witnesses in these enquiries it has been stated already that on account of the difficulty of procuring sufficient evidence of sanctity many hermits and solitaries of extraordinary holiness have never been enrolled in the catalogue of saints. One feels inclined to think that the same remark applies to numbers of saintly men and women living in the world, whose whole lives are one continued act of joyous, cheerful, almost unconscious self-sacrifice and self-denial. From first to last they lead lives of purity ; their hearts and minds are so thoroughly imbued with the Christian spirit that all the imperfections and shortcomings of our nature appear to have died within them, and they seem to be incapable of thinking or acting save on the lines laid down by our Blessed Saviour. Every thought they think, every act they perform, proceeds from the motive of charity, from the love

of God overflowing into a love of the brethren. They suffer, but sadness is a thing apart from their lives ; they know not the joys of this world ; they take their Purgatory here below ; and one can readily believe that when their hour is come they go straight to their reward. They preserve the faith, and hand it down with undimmed lustre to those who come after them. And as the sunshine gives joy and health and vigour in the order of nature, so these holy souls are a source of light and strength, dispelling the clouds of doubt, encouraging the faltering and the timid in the spiritual combat. They shed a gentle influence around them, and the noble example of their lives wins many wayward souls to God. Without ostentation or display the good they do is inestimable.

What Irish priest is there of, say, twenty years' missionary work who has not come across such souls as these ? Some casual act, some chance circumstance, reveals their presence. The writer remembers some years ago being called to administer the last Sacraments to an aged woman. The distance was far—about nine miles—and the attendants at the sick bed had abandoned all hope that the poor old lady could survive till the priest arrived. But she prayed with the most intense fervour that her life would be spared till she

received the last rites of the Church. It would seem as if a miracle had been worked in her favour. Her prayer was granted, and when the priest arrived she burst into wild transports of joy, thanking God most earnestly for His goodness to her, and declaring in the most soul-stirring accents that she knew the Blessed Virgin, to whom she had always prayed for a happy death, would not abandon her in her last hour. The priest rapidly administered the last Sacraments, and just as he had finished the saintly patient breathed forth her soul to God. Her simple earnest faith, her child-like confidence in our Blessed Lady will ever remain engraven upon his memory. We rarely hear of the canonisation of such as these. The means are not available for the rigorous examination required by the Church. But the good God will reward them abundantly in His Heavenly Kingdom.

In regard to the second part of the examination carried out by the Informative Process, it must suffice to state here that it makes minute enquiry into the individual virtues and miracles of the servant of God, examining the possession of the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity; and the four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, as well as the virtues suited to his calling or state in life. For full

details of this examination the reader must be referred to the chapters describing the Process on the individual virtues and the Process on miracles.

In text-books written for the guidance of officials the most minute and elaborate instructions are given as to the mode of procedure. Ample provision is made for every possible contingency. Nothing is overlooked, nothing is left to chance; directions are given for every stage of the enquiry with the most minute detail from the day on which the Postulator of the cause first makes application to the Ordinary of the diocese till the time when a duly signed and sealed copy of the work of the Process is sent by an accredited Bearer to be laid before the Congregation of Rites. The form of oath to be taken by each of the officials is given, forms of letters to Rome, of letters summoning witnesses, of letters granting authority to the officials of the Process; all these are set out with the utmost minuteness, and may be seen by anyone. It is not proposed to overload this little work by giving these forms in detail, their substance will be given so far as is necessary to explain the procedure.

The first step towards the construction of the Informative Process is taken when the Postulator, having satisfied himself that there is

reasonable ground to hope for the success of the cause, and supported by the Commission of Procuration, approaches the Bishop of the diocese and petitions him to establish the Process. The Bishop replies according to the canonical form granting the petition. If the Bishop is impeded from acting in the capacity of Judge he delegates another Bishop or other ecclesiastic to act in his stead according to the powers described above in the chapter on the Construction of Processes. In his letter granting the petition of the Postulator the Bishop fixes the day and hour for the first session, and also designates the place where it is to be held, which must be a church, or an oratory specially devoted to the worship of God. The officials are summoned according to the prescribed method, and all necessary preparation is made for the opening of the Process.

First Session

The first session of the Informative Process, and of all Processes, whether established by Episcopal or Apostolic authority, is held for a twofold purpose, to show fully the authority for constructing the Process, and to administer the oath to some of the officials. The first session of every Process is public, and in all public sessions—that is to say,

when there is no secret discussion—two witnesses are present who sign at the end and bear testimony on oath that the work of the session was duly performed. The Judge takes the oath at the first session, and the Bishop of the diocese, even when not acting in the capacity of Judge, is generally sworn, in order that he may be in a position to assist the Judges by his counsel and advice through the course of the enquiry. In ike manner the Fiscal Promoter and both Notaries take the oath at this session according to the prescribed form. The following documents are incorporated in the record of the session :—The petition of the Postulator to the Bishop and the Bishop's reply granting leave to hold the Process, the Commission of Procuration obtained by the Postulator, the citation of the Fiscal Promoter, the documents granting authority to the two Notaries, to the two Witnesses and to the Messenger. The acts of the session are signed by the Judge, or Judges, when there are more than one, by the Fiscal Promoter, by the Notary deputed to take the part of Actuary, and by the two witnesses. Then the other Notary, sometimes called the Ecclesiastical Notary, prepares and signs a special instrument or document which gives official authority to the work done at the session. A declaration of this kind, duly signed

by the Notary, is absolutely necessary for all sessions in the Informative and all other Processes, and in its absence the work done is null and void, and will not be recognised by the Holy See.

Second Session

The second session of the Informative Process, which is also public, and has the testimony of the two witnesses referred to above, is held for the purpose of receiving the *oath of calumny* from the Postulator, and to present the Propositions and Articles* for the examination, together with a list of the witnesses. At the end of the first session the Fiscal Promoter is generally summoned by the Notary to be present at this the second session. It is expedient to give the words of the oath of calumny taken by the Postulator on this occasion on bended knees and touching the book of the Gospels :—" I swear and promise that I do not enter, that I have not entered, nor shall enter upon this cause and the construction of this Process or any act of this Process from hatred, love, fear, lucre or any other human motive, but solely from zeal for the honour and glory of God, who is magnified and to be praised in His saints ; and that my Principals, who appointed

* See p. 60.

me, had this intention, to whose design as well as to my own I swear by all the clauses expressed or implied in a similar oath of calumny. This is my oath; so help me God and these His holy Gospels."

The oath having been taken and signed, the Judge or Judges admit formally the Propositions and Articles and the list of witnesses, and direct the Notary to summon the witnesses through the Messenger to the third session in order to be sworn. All is signed by the Judge, the Promoter of the Faith and the two witnesses. Lastly, the Notary, as in the first session, signs a declaration that everything was done in due and proper order. The summons to the Fiscal Promoter, the Propositions and Articles, together with the list of witnesses are appended.

Third Session

The third session is devoted exclusively to the swearing of the witnesses. The Messenger must sign a declaration to the effect that he personally summoned the Fiscal Promoter and the several witnesses to this session. The oath is administered in the vernacular, if the witness does not understand Latin; and all the witnesses sign their names to the oath taken. If any witness is unable

to write he makes the sign of the cross as a signature, the Notary adding the words :—" The sign of the cross of the witness *N. N.*, who cannot write." A statement that the witnesses have been duly summoned and sworn is signed by the Judge, by the Fiscal Promoter, and by the two witnesses. The Notary signs a declaration as in the other sessions, and the summonses to the Fiscal Promoter and the witnesses are inserted.

Fourth Session

The examination of the first witness begins at the fourth session.* The proceedings are not open to the public, the evidence being given with closed doors, and only the Judges, the Fiscal Promoter, the Notary and the witness are present. The obligation of secrecy is binding until the decree of publication is issued, when the authenticated copy of the minutes is made towards the end of the Process. The Articles and Interrogatories† are shown at this session, and the witnesses are not allowed to confer amongst themselves, or speak to anyone but the members of the Court concerning the subject-matter of their evidence. The witness to be examined is bound to repeat the oath given in the third

* See p. 65. † See p. 60, *et seq.*

session, but in a shorter form. The questions are put to the witness clearly and in order, and the replies are written *verbatim* by the Notary at the dictation of the Judge or the Fiscal Promoter. The depositions are given not in the third but in the first person—for example, " I have known the servant of God," not " the witness replied that he knew the servant of God." If, however, the witness had no evidence to give regarding one or more Interrogatories—say, for example the 10th—the Notary records it in this manner :—" Concerning the 10th Interrogatory, the witness replied that he knew nothing."

The deposition opens with a long statement setting forth the date of the session and the place where it was held, the names of the officials present, the oath of the witness and its repetition, together with any other important circumstance as given with full details in guide-books for Postulators. If the examination of the witness cannot be completed at this session it is postponed to the following session, for which the time is fixed by the Court and recorded in the minutes. At all sessions of Processes for canonisation it is usual to indicate the work of the succeeding session. Towards the close of the session the witness signs his deposition, and the Judge and Fiscal Promoter also affix their signatures. And the Notary, as in

the other sessions, adds a signed declaration, always necessary for the validity of the session, stating that everything was carried out in order and with the prescribed formality.

Fifth and other Sessions

The examination is continued in this and the following sessions, the regulations above indicated being strictly observed. It may not be out of place to say a word here regarding special witnesses who may be called for examination. The Postulator may, at any stage of the Process, bring on a new witness besides those sworn at the third session. Whenever this is to be done, the name of the witness is first to be given to the Court, next he is to be summoned, then sworn, and finally examined, and these legal acts have to be carried out on separate and distinct days. The induction of a new witness may be combined with the other work of the Process, but the regulations prescribed for ordinary witnesses must be always observed.

If there is question of a witness belonging to another diocese the Judges give a letter directed to the Bishop or Ordinary of the diocese where the witness lives, and, having asked the permission

of the Ordinary, they direct that the witness be duly summoned to give evidence before them.

When Nuns who are bound to religious enclosure are to be examined, the Court is formed in the Convent, usually in the Oratory, and the examination is held there. And in regard to nuns of the more strict observance who cannot be seen by the outside world, the Canon Law makes an exception in favour of the Process of Canonisation, and during the examination of such witnesses they may be seen by the officials of the Court in order that they may be better able to judge of the spirit in which they give their evidence.

A special session is often held for the examination of medical men, surgeons or physicians, who have officially examined an alleged miraculous cure wrought through the intercession of the servant of God. In an enquiry of this kind it is the duty of the Judges to appoint at least two independent medical experts, who need not belong to the Catholic Faith, for the purpose of examining the man or woman alleged to be miraculously healed. They are to testify to the nature of the disease from which the patient suffered, whether the good health, to which he was alleged to be restored, was continuous, whether other ailments followed which might be regarded as an effect of the original disease, and

what they were; also if there is any mark or indication from which they might reasonably conclude that the person in question might again fall into the disease which was said to be driven away. The experts appointed to discharge this momentous duty must appear first before the Judge, the Fiscal Promoter and the Notary, and swear that they will conscientiously discharge the duty entrusted to them.

As was stated above, at least two official witnesses must be called in every Process, and these are to be nominated either by the Fiscal Promoter (or equivalent officer), or by the Judges with his consent. The Postulator, at the end of the examination of the last witness to be called by him, informs the Court that he has no other witness to be examined, and begs that they may proceed further. The Fiscal Promoter objects and says that nothing further can be done until official witnesses are called. The official witnesses are accordingly nominated, summoned, sworn and examined with all the requisite formality.

The last class of witnesses called at Processes for Canonisation are those who give confirmatory evidence. In the examination of other witnesses, whether official or called by the Postulator, the names of persons may be mentioned to the Court

who have special information on a particular point which may or may not be favourable to the success of the cause. Such persons are known as confirmatory witnesses, and they are summoned, sworn and examined with all the formality above described.

When the examination of the last witness for the Process is complete, and the evidence signed, the Postulator petitions the Court for the insertion in the minutes of the various legal documents he may have to produce, also for the publication of the Process, which is always made at this stage of the enquiry, and for the election of a secretary who is to make a faithful copy of the acts or minutes of the Process. Amongst the legal documents to be inserted in the minutes would be a certificate of death of a witness who was to be called, proof that a proposed witness had left the country, a certificate of the Baptism of the servant of God, a dispensation for marriage, or any document showing the profession or state of life of the servant of God. No document of any kind is admitted to the minutes except in the presence and with the consent of the Fiscal Promoter.

As soon as the copy of the minutes is made, wholly or in part, the Judges select another Notary who, with the Actuary, compares the copy of the minutes or acts with the original. The

election of this official can only be made with the consent of the Representative of the Crown. If any errors occur in the work of the Scribe, such errors are noted in the margin by a cross, and the necessary corrections made. Finally, at a special session, in presence of the Judges and the Fiscal Promoter, the copy, amended if necessary, is compared with the original, and the Judges, the Fiscal Promoter, the two Notaries and two witnesses sign a declaration to the effect that the copy and original are in perfect harmony and agreement.

Last Session

In the following session, which is the last, and which is held in presence of the Ordinary of the diocese, the copy of the minutes, properly signed and sealed, is placed in a casket, which is afterwards sealed and given to the accredited Bearer, together with the letters of the Bishop, and of the Judges, addressed to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, and the letter of the Fiscal Promoter directed to the Promoter of the Faith in Rome. The Bearer is sworn to the faithful execution of his trust, and a declaration is signed by the Ordinary, the Judges, the Fiscal Promoter and the Notary to the effect that the work of the

session has been properly performed. It sometimes happens that two Fiscal Promoters are delegated for the Ordinary Process, and then both sign the letters sent to the Promoter of the Faith in the Eternal City. The presentation of these acts and letters to the appointed Bearer completes the work of the Informative Process, and the first step is taken on the road to canonisation.

CHAPTER VI

Process Regarding Non-Cultus

It will be remembered that in the early ages of the Church there was no prohibition in regard to paying religious honour to persons who had died in the odour of sanctity. Not only was such honour not forbidden, but the practice of rendering it received a certain measure of encouragement and approval, and for many centuries "canonisation by the faithful" was, on examination, recognised by ecclesiastical authority. But with the expansion of the Church it was found that abuses began to creep into this form of discipline, arising as well from the indiscretions of popular fervour as from the want of close supervision on the part of some Bishops, especially in omitting to enquire closely into the lives of those who received religious honour. A very remarkable instance of irregular cultus came under the notice of Alexander III. (1159–81), and the Pope, in dealing with the case, said that "some, following the ways of the pagans and deceived by the fraud of the evil one, venerated as a saint a man who had been killed while intoxicated." To guard

against future abuse Alexander III. took occasion, in connection with this case, to forbid religious honour unless with the authority of the Roman Church. But difficulties arose as to the full meaning of the decretal of Alexander, and some Bishops continued to exercise the right of beatification which they had hitherto enjoyed. To put an end to all controversy and finally settle the question, Urban VIII. issued a Bull in 1625, confirmed by a later Bull, 1634, reserving exclusively to the Holy See not only its immemorial right of canonisation, but also that of beatification. The decree of Urban commands that no religious honour be paid to any servant of God who is not beatified; and it is for the purpose of enquiring into the observance of this decree that the Process regarding non-cultus is established.

In regard to the finding of this Process, it is right to say that, even if the Process decided that some small measure of cultus was paid by indiscreet persons to the deceased servant of God, such a verdict, whilst involving further enquiry and delay, would not necessarily be fatal to the success of the cause. But any grave violation of the decree of Urban would constitute a real danger to its success. For, apart from the possibility that some characteristic of the deceased might be revealed that was inconsistent with

holiness of life, the Pope, as Supreme Pastor of the faithful, will take very serious notice of any practice which might be detrimental to the purity of public worship.

After the formation of the Ordinary Informative Process the Process of non-cultus is the next step in the canonisation of saints. This Process can be established either by Episcopal or, as it is called, Ordinary authority, or by the authority of the Holy See, known as Apostolic authority. If the Process is to be formed by Ordinary authority it must be constructed before the Commission of Introduction is signed; for, after Rome has made the cause its own in this manner, no authority is recognised except what is derived from the special delegation of the Roman See.

The Process regarding non-cultus is generally established in the diocese in which the servant of God was born, or in the diocese in which he died, for, as a general rule, the incentives towards the prohibited honour are stronger in these places than anywhere else. In all cases the Judge of the Process must visit the sepulchre of the deceased to see for himself if there are any signs there that religious honour has been rendered in violation of the decree. And if there is reason to suspect that cultus was paid elsewhere to the servant of God, the Judge has authority to examine the local

Bishop on the point, and the testimony of the Bishop is accepted as sufficient proof of the absence of veneration. In the cause of Venerable Oliver Plunket, Cardinal Logue produced some evidence from Downside regarding the observance of the decree of non-cultus.

The actual work of this Process presents no features of special difficulty. There is no scope for expert evidence on historical documents. And the acts constituting religious honour, into which it is the duty of the Court to enquire, have been clearly defined by the Holy See. These recognised acts of cultus are set forth at length in the chapter on the case excepted from the Bull of Urban.* And in this connection it is worthy of note that Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, wishing to ornament his Cathedral with stained glass windows depicting remarkable events in the life of Joan of Arc, beatified 18th April, 1909, enquired of the Roman Congregation before taking action whether such decoration would be a violation of the decree of non-cultus. The Congregation replied in the negative, saying he could carry out his wish, provided that the scenes represented were of a purely historical character, excluding all idea of religious honour. On the 14th August, 1894, a decree was issued from

* See p. 209.

Rome :—" That the images of men and women who died with a reputation for sanctity, but had not yet attained the honours of beatification or canonisation, could in no circumstances be placed on the altars, and could not be presented with diadems or rays round the head, or other signs of sanctity; but that their images or their deeds could be depicted on the walls of the Church or on coloured glass, provided that such images bore no indication of sanctity or religious honour, nor anything profane or foreign to the recognised custom of the church." In like manner it is no violation of the decree to preserve relics of the servant of God, provided they are kept in a place separated from the relics of those who have been canonised or beatified. And again, if the faithful should receive special favours through the intercession of the servant of God, and should on this account present offerings, such as votive tablets or the like, such offerings are not to be rejected, and should be carefully preserved in some place not exposed to public view. A statue placed on the sepulchre is not generally regarded as a sign of cultus, for in many places, as Notre Dame in Paris, it is customary to have such statues placed on the tombs of the illustrious dead. It is better, however, that such decorations should not be found on the graves of servants of God lest

their presence should tend to promote religious veneration on the part of visitors. Finally, persons in charge of the burial places of servants of God should take special care that nothing is done through the piety and devotion of the faithful which would be a violation of the Papal decrees.

In this Process it is customary to call at least eight or ten witnesses, and of these two are official witnesses—that is, they are selected not by the Promoter of the cause, but either by the Judge, or by the Promoter of the Faith or his representative. The witnesses must be persons of intelligence, high principle and integrity, who are capable of giving solid reasons for their evidence. It is not sufficient for them to state that they do not know that the relics of the servant of God were venerated. Negative evidence is of little value; and the witnesses must be in a position to show that it was morally impossible that such honour could have been given without their knowledge. To avoid all difficulty and delay it should be clearly proved that, although the deceased died in the odour of sanctity, although his intercession was invoked and his memory held in benediction, still nothing was ever done which would savour of public ecclesiastical cultus. It belongs to the Supreme Pontiff alone to permit

religious honour, and if this prerogative is not duly recognised there is much danger that the cause would be definitely abandoned and come to nought.

It is assumed here that the Process for conducting the enquiry into non-cultus is constructed not by Apostolic but by Ordinary authority. All the canonical formalities required for the Informative Process must be carefully observed; there is a petition made to the Ordinary by the Postulator for establishing the Process, and the Rescript of the Ordinary must be sent in reply granting the petition and stating the object of the enquiry. Sessions are then held for showing Articles and Interrogatories, for naming the witnesses, summoning, swearing, and examining them, and everything proceeds as in the Ordinary Process, those changes only being made which are necessarily required by the name and nature of the enquiry.

Inspection of the Body

There is, however, one important session connected with the Process of non-cultus which demands some notice—that is to say, the session for visiting the tomb, and for exhuming and identifying the body of the deceased servant of God.

The bodies of servants of God who have departed this life may be buried in a separate or common grave, care being taken that an inscription suitable for identification is placed on the coffin. The Ordinary of the diocese, or the dignitary who is deputed to be judge of the Process, proceeds to the burial-place of the deceased, and there examines at least two trustworthy witnesses who have been solemnly sworn. They are asked if they were so well acquainted with the personal appearance of the deceased that, taking it for granted there was no substantial change, they could recognise the body so as to leave no doubt of its identity. If there had been a previous exhumation, as described in Chapter III., the official documents connected therewith should be at hand so that identification could be proved with absolute certainty.

If there is question of identifying the body before it is removed from the grave the witnesses are asked whether they knew the place of burial, and they must point out the exact spot ; they must say if they have heard that the body was taken up and transferred to another grave, indicating the time when this took place, by whom it was done, and all the other circumstances. They must also declare the source of their information—as, for example, that they dwelt in the same religious

house as the deceased, that they were caretakers of the burial ground, or that they knew it from common knowledge and belief.

The witnesses having been heard, the grave is opened, and then the coffin, in which are placed the remains of the servant of God, is also opened by carpenters who are sworn to the faithful discharge of this duty. All this takes place in presence of the Ordinary, or his delegate of the Fiscal Promoter and witnesses.

The Ordinary, or his delegate, may call skilled surgeons or physicians, if the body is incorrupt or emits an odour regarded as supernatural, and these experts are sworn and examined in presence of the Court on the day of exhumation, or another fixed day, and give their opinion in writing on the state of the body. The entire proceedings should be carried through without any mark of public worship, or transgression of the decree of Urban, and the Fiscal Promoter should give solemn warning to this effect.

To ensure obedience to the decree of Urban VIII. regarding non-cultus the bodies of servants of God should be buried in such a manner that the flagstone over the grave is on a level with the ground, and if the burial takes place in a church the grave must be at least three cubits from the altar steps.

Canonical identification of the body of a servant of God is a work that is carried through in a most thorough and realistic manner. The Notary, who must be a cleric, prepares a statement describing the grave or tomb and the appearance of the place where it is found; he also describes minutely the coffin in which the body is placed, the condition of the body, the shroud, and general appearance. The shape of the coffin is set forth, the material of which it is composed, its length, breadth, and depth, and if there is a leaden shell, or other lining to the coffin, this is also carefully described. A statement, written generally on a durable metal plate, is drawn up giving the name and surname of the servant of God, his condition in life, with the date of his death and the date of the identification and re-burial. This is signed by the Ordinary or his delegate, and placed reverently in the coffin of the deceased. The coffin is then bound with bands which can resist damp, and the binding is done in such a manner that the coffin cannot be opened without cutting the bands. The seal of the Ordinary, on red Spanish wax, is impressed on several places, every precaution being taken to ensure that there would be no difficulty in recognising the remains at any future time.

If the old coffin has fallen to pieces, a new one

is added, which must also be described with the utmost detail.

An official statement of the identification is finally prepared, signed by the Judge, the Fiscal Promoter, and two witnesses, and countersigned by the Chancellor or Notary, and this document is deposited in the episcopal archives for future use.

If, from any reason, the grave of the servant of God cannot be found, the visitation of the tomb cannot, of course, be carried out, but by the indulgence of the Holy See the Cause may proceed. This actually occurred in the case of Blessed Bernard Ptolemy. It was shown from historical records that he died of a plague in the year 1657, and was buried with others who died from the same cause, and the Holy Father gave permission to omit the visitation and identification.

From what has been said it will be readily seen that the work of identifying the tomb, though generally associated with the Process of non-cultus, is altogether distinct from this enquiry. Whether the session of identification is held or not the Process of non-cultus is closed in the ordinary way. The usual sessions are held for comparing the copy of the acts and minutes with the original, letters are written to Rome by the Judge and the Fiscal Promoter, and all the ceremonial observed which

has been already described in the chapter on the Informative Process.

It only remains to be said here that, if a long period elapses from the time in which the minutes were sent to Rome to the day on which the Process was opened before the Congregation for reviewing the sentence of the Judge, then the question may arise whether a new cultus was introduced in this interval. A special Process is sometimes instituted for this enquiry, but it often happens that the question is settled by an Apostolic letter to the Bishop of the place, directing him to proceed to the tomb with the Fiscal Promoter, the Notary, and witnesses for the purpose of enquiring in this informal manner whether there is any evidence that a new cultus was introduced.

CHAPTER VII

The Examination of the Writings

According to the Decrees and Constitutions of the Holy See, the writings of the servant of God, if any such exist, must be carefully examined before the Introduction of the Cause. The law of Urban VIII. directs that a "most diligent enquiry be made as to whether the servant of God whose canonisation is sought wrote any books, tracts, meditations, or the like; for if any such have been written no enquiry is to be carried on until such books are carefully examined by the Congregation to see whether they contain any errors contrary to faith or morals, or any novel doctrine opposed to the sound and pure teaching of the Church."

Under the general head of writings come all books, treatises, tracts, essays, petitions, sermons, meditations, letters, and written matter of any kind, whether written by the hand of the servant of God, written by his directions, or dictated to a secretary. The examination of the writings took place occasionally, by special dispensation of the Pope, *after* the Introduction of the Cause. The

object of the dispensation was to hasten the work of the " Process lest the proofs should perish " and prevent the loss of important evidence. But the dispensation is rarely granted at the present day. And the reason is clear ; for if any writings came to light which contained anything contrary to faith or morals* the cause would come to nought, and all the labour and expense of the other enquiries would be in vain.

According to the usage which now obtains the search for the writings is carried on during the existence of the Informative Process. And since this quest is carried out before the Commission of Introduction is signed, it can be done validly and legitimately by the Ordinary. Nevertheless, in order that the search may be made most carefully, and according to the requirements of Canon Law, the Holy Father commits authority to the Bishop of the diocese where the writings may exist to carry it through, and proceed according to the directions given by the chief Promoter of the Faith. And if the Promoter suspects that writings of the deceased are preserved in other places besides those named it is his duty to procure a mandate from the Congregation direct·

* If the objectionable sentiments were submitted to the judgment of the Church, or retracted afterwards by the servant of God, they would not form an obstacle to the beatification.

ing that a search be made in such places with the same care and formality.

In order to carry out faithfully the trust committed to him the Ordinary, either by his own act or that of his sub-delegate, institutes a special Process or Court of enquiry. And on account of the extreme care and diligence observed in the search, the Process is technically known as "The Little Process of the Diligences." For the establishment of this Court the Ordinary summons to his presence the Promoter of the Faith and the Notary, explains to them the business on hands, and directs that the letter of the Congregation and the instructions contained in it be read. The Ordinary then issues a command that a public edict be prepared to be posted on the doors of the Cathedral Church of the diocese, and in other places, according to the usage followed in diocesan promulgations. In this edict, which is sometimes sent to parish priests, all persons are admonished and commanded, under pain of censure if necessary, to hand over to the Ordinary any writings of the servant of God in their possession, and also to make known to the Ordinary the names of all persons who hold such writings.

The Little Process of the Diligences, like other Processes, consists of several sessions, and the

proceedings just described form the work of the first session.

In the second session witnesses are sworn and examined. Those who surrendered writings of the servant of God are examined under oath as to the authenticity of such writings, the places where they were preserved, and other circumstances. It may sometimes happen that a witness, who is giving up writings of the servant of God, testifies, in the course of examination, that other persons possess such writings and have not handed them up to the Judge of the Process. In these circumstances the Bishop sends a messenger to summon such persons, and leaves nothing undone to have the writings produced before the Process.

Should it come to the knowledge of the Ordinary that writings of the servant of God are preserved in any Library, College, or Public Institution, a special session is held there, and the custodian is examined with all the usual solemnity.

The work of the Process is brought to a conclusion by a special session in which all the collected writings of every kind are carefully packed and sealed by the Ordinary for transmission to the Congregation of Rites. The Notary makes a complete and accurate inventory of the writings, setting out the number of pages they contain, and any other circumstances worthy of note. And, as

in other Processes, an authentic copy of the work done is made; this copy is compared with the Original, signed by the Notary, and sealed by the Judge of the Process. It is carefully preserved in the episcopal archives.

When the writings are all discovered and collected, they are sent by an accredited Bearer to the Congregation of Rites. Here the work of examination begins. A Cardinal Relator of the cause is selected, and the Postulator petitions the Pope to grant him authority to depute Revisers, who, under the law of strict secrecy, submit the writings to the most careful scrutiny. One or more Revisers are selected, according to the extent and character of the writings to be examined. The names of the Revisers are never revealed to the Postulator of the Cause. Their duties, in a word, consist in carefully examining the writings to see if they contain anything contrary to faith or morals or to sound and pure doctrine.

Various contingencies may arise from this examination. If nothing unfavourable is found the Cardinal Relator submits the decision of the Revisers to an ordinary meeting of the Congregation, and this Tribunal decrees that "the cause may proceed further." If, however, the Revisers should find anything censurable in the writings, their judgment is submitted to the

Congregation by the Revisers themselves, who also state whatever may be advanced from the writings in defence of the servant of God. Should the Congregation decide that the difficulties here have been met by this statement it decrees as before that the cause may proceed. It may, however, happen that the objections are of a more serious nature ; and if there is any proposition opposed to faith or morals this would be destructive, and the cause would at once come to nought. There is one other alternative : the objections may not have been completely answered by the Revisers, and yet they may not be of such a formidable character as to be judged fatal to the cause. In these circumstances the decision of the Revisers is handed to the Promoter of the Faith for his consideration. On the other hand, the Advocate selected by the Postulator prepares a reply. Copies of this reply are given to the Promoter and Sub-promoter of the Faith, to the Master of the Apostolic Palace, to the Procurator of the Cause, and to other officials. A special meeting of the Congregation is summoned to pronounce judgment. The Procurator pleads in favour of the cause, the Promoter, on the other hand, as in duty bound, urges the objections. The arguments on both sides are carefully heard and weighed with the utmost care. There is no

middle course now; the judgment must be either favourable or fatal to the cause. If the Congregation considers that all difficulties have been satisfactorily overcome it publishes a favourable decree, reserving, however, to the Promoter of the Faith the right to raise objections from these writings against the virtues of the servant of God.

If but little written matter is left by the deceased no Revisers are appointed, and the Cardinal Relator treats of it before an ordinary meeting of the Congregation.

All the writings are restored to the original owners when the final examination is complete. But they must not be returned at this stage, for the Promoter of the Faith must examine them anew to see if they contain anything derogatory to the claim for heroic virtue in the servant of God.

The examination of the writings is no empty formality; it has happened that causes, otherwise progressing favourably, have come to an end or have been deferred for a long time by reason of difficulties arising from this revision. Benedict XIV., Book II., chap. 31, gives an instance of a servant of God who taught in his theological works that the Pope could dispense—with regard to those countries in which there is no wine—to the effect that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

could be offered with bread alone. The teaching was based on a supposed decree of Pope Innocent VIII. granting permission to have Mass offered in Norway under the one species. The difficulty was discussed at great length, and finally it was decided that the cause could proceed. The reason of this favourable decision was that the servant of God taught this proposition at a time when the alleged decree was regarded as authentic and legitimate. But the decree, as a matter of historical fact, was an impudent forgery; it was issued in the name of the Pope, but the authors of the forgery were convicted and suffered the death penalty for their crime.

CHAPTER VIII

The Apostolic Process on Reputation in General

Judicial order requires that, in the regular course of events, no specific enquiry would be instituted until all generic examinations have first taken place; and therefore it would be expected that the Apostolic Process on the Reputation in General would be the first Process established after the Introduction of the Cause. But in the procedure of canonisation things do not always happen with this perfect chronological order and regularity. There is often grave reason for changing the usual sequence of events. For from its very nature the "Process, lest the proofs should perish"* (Processus ne pereant probationes), should be established as soon as possible after the Commission of Introduction is signed. And if it were deferred until the Process on the Reputation was complete there would sometimes be great danger that valuable evidence would be lost to the cause, especially the testimony of eye-witnesses, which is always of supreme importance in Apostolic

* See p. 136.

Processes. There is no reason in Canon Law why the Process on the Reputation should not be constructed at the same time as the "Process lest the proofs should perish," and Remissorial Letters are sometimes sought for the simultaneous construction of both Processes. The matter is left altogether to the discretion and prudence of the Postulator. But when a number of Processes are running concurrently it is often difficult to devote to each of them the careful attention and diligence which are necessary. Hence, it is generally considered advisable that the construction of this Process be deferred till the Process "lest the proofs should perish," is complete. The enquiry into non-cultus must be finished and judgment given at Rome before the Process on the Reputation is established, unless on the petition of the Postulator a dispensation is granted.

The work of this Process is strictly confined to an examination of the reputation for virtue and miracles of the servant of God. Unlike the Informative Process it never enquires into individual virtues or individual miracles, and if a miracle has been wrought which would be useful for the purpose of beatification it is examined in the Process "lest the proofs should perish." Although the reputation for sanctity and miracles has been already established by the Informative Process,

this proof must be always confirmed by the Apostolic Process. And the question to be discussed in this Process is: "Whether there is satisfactory proof of the validity and relevance of the Process constructed in the diocese, *N.*, on the reputation for sanctity, virtues, and miracles in general of the servant of God in the cause and for the purpose of this enquiry."

In addition to this review the Apostolic Process makes a distinct and independent enquiry into the reputation of the servant of God. A more rigid proof is required in the Apostolic than in the Informative Process. And since a considerable time must have elapsed since the examination by the Informative Process, the Apostolic Process enquires further whether the reputation for sanctity still survives, and whether it has lost force or continues to gather strength day by day.

The reputation for sanctity of which there is question in this enquiry is different according as the servant of God under discussion is a reputed confessor or martyr. The reputation for sanctity of a reputed confessor is nothing else than a widespread opinion or report regarding the integrity of his life and the excellence of his virtues, and also regarding the miracles wrought through his intercession. In the case of a reputed martyr, the reputation for sanctity, or the reputation for

martyrdom, as it is called, is a common opinion regarding his death for the faith of Christ, or for some virtue taught by revelation, suffered with patience, and illustrated by signs or miracles. The reputation for sanctity always refers to causes of confessors, unless the contrary is made clear. The full details of the examination and the manner in which the reputation is established are given at length in the chapter on the Informative Process, and it is unnecessary to repeat these particulars here.

The Postulator of the cause is not restricted as to the number of witnesses to be called, but at least eight or ten should be produced, of which two must be official witnesses cited by the Judge or by the Promoter of the Faith. If in the course of examination any witness should mention any person or persons who are acquainted with any important fact or circumstance connected with the reputation, whether favourable or unfavourable to the cause, such person or persons must be examined, and their evidence recorded in the minutes of the Process. The witnesses already examined in the Informative Process, and in the Process "lest the proofs should perish," if it has been constructed, may all be re-examined in this Process. Besides these additional witnesses may also be called to give a more rigid proof of the

reputation, and some new witnesses should be called to show whether it has continued since the date of the Informative Process. The whole difficulty is the question of proof and the degree of proof required. And the object of the Postulator should be to produce witnesses who can give general testimony regarding the youth and condition of life of the servant of God, so that the opinion about his sanctity and holiness which prevailed during his life and up to the time of the enquiry may be set forth in the clearest light.

As the Apostolic Process on the reputation is, in the ordinary course of events, the first Process held after the Introduction of the Cause, it will be useful to explain the mode of procedure followed in its construction and in carrying out its work. The Congregation of Rites institutes the Process only on Petition, and nothing is done until the Postulator begs the Congregation of Rites to take action. First of all, he obtains from the Holy Father a decree in virtue of which a Remissorial Letter is granted. This decree is shown to the Promoter of the Faith, and then given to the Chancellor of the Congregation of Rites, who prepares the Remissorial Letter. In every Court of Law there are two sides to the question to be tried, and the same is true of every Process in the canonisation of saints. The

Postulator of the Cause represents the one side and the Promoter of the Faith, popularly known as the "Advocatus Diaboli," is representative of the other. In addition to the Remissorial Letter, another letter is sent by the Promoter of the Faith. These two letters are of the highest importance. The validity of the Process depends chiefly on the strict observance of the conditions and forms prescribed in them, and therefore all those who have charge of the Process should read them most carefully, and become thoroughly familiar with their contents.

Then the Postulator or the Promoter of the Cause should write the articles,* which may be prepared from the evidence already given in the Informative Process. In the Apostolic Process regarding reputation for sanctity in general but few articles are required: one for each virtue will be sufficient. These articles are by long-established custom given to the Promoter of the Faith, who prepares the Interrogatories upon which the Judges examine the witnesses, for in Apostolic Processes the Judges can never take action, except with the sanction of the Promoter of the Faith or the Sub-promoters whom he designates.

The Promoter of the Cause next hands both the

* See meaning of Articles, p. 60.

Articles and the Interrogatories to the Chancellor of the Congregation, who carefully incloses them and seals them with the seal of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Rites. They are then taken away by the Postulator to be given to the Judges of the Process. And if the Process is held outside Rome the letters are directed to the Bishop of the Diocese and his Vicar-General and to the four Dignitaries or Canons who have been deputed to co-operate as judges. At the same time the Promoter of the Faith in the city writes to the Fiscal Promoter of the Diocese, and in virtue of the authority granted in the Remissorial Letter constitutes him his Sub-promoter of the Faith.

When these preliminaries are arranged a number of letters are written, the forms of which are prescribed by the Holy See, and may be seen in the text-books written for the guidance of Postulators. The Postulator first writes to the Bishop who is to be Judge, showing his own Mandate of Procuration, and begging him to establish the Court in accordance with the faculties given in the Remissorial Letter which he presents. If the due formalities are observed and everything is in order the Bishop replies granting the petition and fixing the time and place for the enquiry. Then the Promoter Fiscal is summoned by the authority of

the Bishop to be present at the first session, to inspect the Remissorial Letter, and see that all the prescribed formalities are duly carried out.

The First Session

The Postulator or Vice-postulator appears in person, and showing his authority in the Mandate of Procuration, begs that by virtue of the faculties given in the Remissorial Letter the Process be constructed. The letter is then read through, but as no witnesses are examined at this session and the reading of the Interrogatories is omitted, the Bishop and other delegated Judges take the oath prescribed according to the form given in the Remissorial Letter. At this stage the Letter of the Promoter of the Faith sent from Rome is read to the assembly; and the Sub-promoter of the Faith, the Notary and the Messenger bind themselves by oath with all the forms and solemnities required. Finally, all the necessary documents are inserted in the records of the Process.

Second and following Sessions

The Second Session is held on the day and in the place fixed by the Judges, and at this session the Postulator of the Cause takes the oath of

calumny,* and hands to the Court a list of the witnesses to be examined. If in this Process there is question of a servant of God who lives in the cloister, the Postulator should take care that amongst the witnesses to be examined four, three, or at least two, should be external witnesses—that is to say, they should be witnesses who do not belong to the Order in which the servant of God was professed. This is in accordance with the direction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and follows from the teaching of Benedict XIV.

In the third session the witnesses are sworn in the manner prescribed in the Remissorial Letter, the Judges and one of the Sub-promoters of the Faith being present. In this session the time for holding the fourth session is indicated, in which one or more of the witnesses will be subjected to examination.

The fourth and succeeding sessions are devoted to the examination of witnesses according to the Interrogatories sent from the Holy See, to which reference has already been made. And should any of the witnesses point to any one who denies the alleged reputation it is the solemn duty both of the Judges and the Promoter of the Faith to produce and examine such a hostile witness. This witness will, however, be called upon to

* See p. 52.

swear that he does not take up this position of hostility from enmity, ill-will, or any private reason, but simply for the love of truth and justice.

The examination of the witnesses having concluded, additional sessions are held to bring the Process to a close, and the same rules are observed which are required for terminating the Informative Process.

Tracing the fortunes of the enquiry in the Eternal City it may be said that when the Pope grants permission to open the acts and minutes of the Process a Summary and Information are prepared. The Summary consists of two parts, one containing the documents which should be incorporated in the records of the Process, and the other containing the depositions of witnesses. In like manner the Information is divided into two parts, of which one has regard to the *validity* of the Process—namely, whether it was carried through in accordance with the requirements of Canon Law and the Remissorial Letter, and the other regards its *relevancy*, whether from the evidence of witnesses and from documents the reputation was fully proved.

The Promoter of the Faith next raises objections, to which the Procurator responds, and a *Statement on the Reputation in General* is prepared and printed.

Then the question is put *whether there is satisfactory proof of the validity and relevance of the Process.* This question should ordinarily be proposed in a *general* meeting of the Congregation, but, according to ancient custom, the Holy Father when petitioned grants leave to discuss it in an *ordinary* meeting of the Congregation without the intervention or vote of the Consulters.

The Sacred Congregation replies to the proposed question either *affirmatively*, or *negatively*, or *postponed*, which last reply implies that difficulties have arisen which require more mature consideration. It is the duty of the Postulator and the Patron of the cause to try with all possible care to meet these difficulties. Sometimes the answer to the proposed question is "*postponed according to intention,*" and the Congregation makes known its intention. In this case also the Postulator will endeavour to remove all obstacles and satisfy the Congregation. The decree of the Congregation is the supreme and final judgment, from which there is no appeal, and which settles the question of the reputation for all time.

It may be observed in conclusion that when there is a long interval between the opening of the Process and the date on which the question is proposed, the Promoter of the Faith may object

that the reputation for sanctity has died out in this period. In these circumstances a new Process is not required, and the continuance of the reputation is proved by a letter to the Ordinary, and by the evidence of witnesses examined according to the mandate of the Congregation.

CHAPTER IX

The Apostolic Process on the Virtues and Miracles in Particular

The real trial of the candidate for canonisation begins with the work of this Process which enquires into the very nature and genuineness of the individual virtues and miracles. All the other Processes are essential conditions in the procedure for canonisation, but still they are merely preliminary and they all lead up to the strict and careful examination carried out by this Process. As has been already observed, judicial order requires that the duties of the Informative and Apostolic Processes should be complete before this Process is established. And hence the work of these two Processes is aptly compared to the finding of a grand jury in the law of this country. Like the grand jury the task they undertake is to decide whether or not the case is to go on for trial. And when their judgment is favourable to the cause, then and then only, does the Holy See establish the Process on the virtues and miracles in particular.

This Process usually consists of at least two

parts, the Inchoative or Inceptive Process and the Continuative Process. Notwithstanding its title, the Process sometimes confines its investigations altogether to the virtues, omitting the examination on miracles, and then a distinct Process is constructed to enquire into particular miracles, in order that the result may be submitted to the consideration of the Congregation of Rites.

The Inchoative Process, or the Process lest the Proofs should Perish

The nature of this Process is clearly indicated by its title, and its object is to take valuable evidence which might be lost if there was notable delay. At first sight it would seem that this Process was not neccessary in causes of ancient standing when eye-witnesses could no longer exist. But even in such causes this Process is often most useful, for witnesses may be found whose evidence would not be available in case of delay, and who are intimately acquainted with the traditional and historical knowledge of the servant of God, so that the cause would suffer materially if deprived of their illuminating testimony.

The decree of Pope Innocent XI. requires that, after the findings of the Informative Process are presented at Rome, a period of ten years should

elapse before the Introduction of the cause. If, however, there is danger of losing important evidence, the Postulator of the Cause may, through his Procurator, ask a dispensation from this delay, and the Holy Father usually grants such a petition. In these exceptional circumstances the Process, "lest the proofs should perish," may be constructed before the completion either of the Process on non-cultus or the Apostolic Process on reputation in general. It is obvious that the danger referred to nearly always exists, and, according to the more recent discipline, it is customary, on the petition of the Postulator, to establish this Process immediately after the Commission of Introduction has been signed by the Supreme Pontiff.

In this Process the jurisdiction of the Judges is more limited than usual; they are restricted as to the time within which their work should be done, and as regards the witnesses to be submitted for examination. For if the Process is unduly protracted some of the witnesses may be no longer available, and this may be detrimental to the cause. Then, again, the Judges receive powers to examine only a certain class of witnesses—namely, those who, on account of advanced age or infirm health, are in danger of dying before the close of the enquiries on non-cultus and reputation

in general, and also such witnesses as are soon to depart from the place where the Process is constructed. In this connection those witnesses are regarded as old who have reached the age of fifty years. In addition to fresh witnesses all those already examined in the Informative Process are called again to give evidence in the Apostolic Process on the individual virtues and miracles; and hence it should be the first care of the Postulator to find out who amongst these witnesses are old, infirm, or soon to leave the place. And if any of these witnesses has already died, left the place, or is incapable of appearing through ill-health, or any other cause, it is the duty of the Court to obtain authentic testimony regarding such decease, disappearance or incapacity. Witnesses already examined in the Informative Process must make no reference to their previous evidence; they are to submit their statements to the Court as if they had never been examined before. Official witnesses are not called at this enquiry, but hostile witnesses, if any are indicated, must be submitted to careful examination.

At the close of the enquiry all the acts of the Process are carefully enclosed and sealed by the Judges, who use a special seal; they are then handed over to be preserved in the episcopal archives until they are finally incorporated with

the acts of the Continuative Process. With these exceptions the Process, "lest the proofs should perish," carries on its work precisely in the same manner as other Apostolic Processes, observing with scrupulous care all the rules and solemnities approved by the Holy See.

The Continuative Process on the Virtues and Miracles in Particular

This Process is called continuative because it is the continuation and complement of the Inchoative Process which by the indulgence of the Holy Father has been established provisionally—that is to say, lest the proofs should be lost. In reality it is one and the same Process with the other, having the same subject-matter, the only difference being that what was begun in the other is in this Process continued and brought to a conclusion. In this Process witnesses are examined without any restriction as to age or health or immediate absence, and besides hostile and official witnesses, and those already examined in the Informative Process, the Postulator is at liberty to call any others that may be deemed useful, especially those who are capable of giving evidence of a miracle that may be proposed for the purpose of beatification. If any witnesses already examined in the Informative Process

cannot now be produced to give evidence the Postulator should be able to testify to their death, or absence, or any other impediment preventing their examination.

The acts of both Processes are combined so that the two parts form one Process on the virtues and miracles in particular. With the acts of this Process are also included all documents and writings connected with the cause, and except the proceedings on non-cultus the acts of all Episcopal Processes if constructed in Apostolic form.

It is superfluous to repeat the forms already given in the Apostolic Process on Reputation in general, for the present Process follows exactly the lines there laid down—there is a petition from the Postulator to the Bishop or Archbishop, the Bishop's reply, the election of Judges, and an additional Sub-promoter of the Faith, the election of an Actuary and Messenger, the swearing in of all these officials, the oath of the Postulator *de calumnia*, the opening and reading of the Remissorial Letter and the Letter of the Promoter of the Faith resident in Rome. The sessions are begun and carried on with the due and careful observance of all the forms and solemnities already described.

It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the

Process on the individual virtues and miracles is the cardinal enquiry in all causes of canonisation. It is here the real merits of the deceased are put to the test ; and this Process is the Supreme Court, which determines finally whether or not the servant of God is endowed with those virtues and gifts which must adorn all those who are placed on the catalogue of saints. The reader must therefore take care that his mind is not distracted by the forms and ceremonies required for the Process, and that his attention is specially directed to the subject-matter of the enquiry.

What then is the question to be investigated by this Commission ? The reply is briefly this : did the person proposed for beatification practise virtue in the heroic degree, and was this virtue illustrated by the gift of miracles ? Here we have in a few pregnant words the entire scope and significance of the enquiry. And in solving the question at issue the Process covers a very wide field. The whole life of the servant of God, from his most tender years to the close of his earthly career, is brought under review, and submitted to the fierce white light of the most searching investigation.

And in particular the Process investigates the signs of sanctity which the servant of God showed from his earliest youth, what was the origin of his

vocation if he embraced the religious life, how he put into practice the virtues of his calling or state of life, and whether he practised the moral and theological virtues and those things belonging to them in the heroic degree.

In examining the possession of virtue the three Divine virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity are first dealt with. And in regard to the Divine virtue of *faith*, the foundation of all sanctity, the Process makes enquiry as to whether the servant of God often returned thanks to God that he was born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, and prayed that all would be brought within her fold; whether he always gave a firm assent to all the articles and mysteries of Faith: especially with what fervour he adored the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the august Sacrament of the Altar. It is also enquired whether he loved devotion to the Blessed Virgin, whether he endeavoured to propagate it, and how; whether he prayed long and frequently before the Blessed Sacrament; if a priest, with what fervour of spirit he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, how he prepared for it, and whether in the act of celebration there appeared external signs of faith; whether he showed a tender devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ; whether he often meditated on this mystery, with

what fervour and piety, and whether he strove to enkindle this devotion in others. It is also asked whether he paid special veneration to the Blessed inhabitants of Heaven, which of them he selected as patrons, and with what devotion he honoured them; did he burn with the desire of propagating the Catholic Faith and of shedding his blood for the truths of faith; whether he taught the truths of Christianity to the faithful; whether he taught the catechism; whether, if a priest, he preached earnestly and taught the Word of God with fruit; did he venerate the Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers. It is enquired whether he obeyed the laws of the Church and the commands of his Superiors, whether he showed honour to the Supreme Pontiff and all the ministers of God; whether he rejoiced when some erring one was converted to the Catholic Faith, and was mournful when the Church suffered loss or persecution; whether the decoration of the house of God was dear to his heart and the observance of the sacred ceremonies. Finally, enquiry is made as to whether he observed faithfully the precepts of God and the Church, whether he desired to gain Indulgences, whether he hated all bad books and everything opposed to the Faith, whether he frequently approached the Sacraments of Penance

and Holy Communion, and in fine whether God illustrated his faith by any miracle or special favour.

Then, as to the Divine virtue of *hope*, it is asked whether, from the merits of Christ Our Lord, he firmly hoped for eternal salvation; with what confidence he practised good works, and whether he strove to excite this confidence in others; whether he despised the things of this world, and how he showed this contempt; whether in trying circumstances he placed his trust in God alone, and had recourse to prayer; whether in adversity he was resigned to the goodness of God, and the decrees of His Providence; whether he directed his desires and all his actions to God as his last end; whether he bore cheerfully adversity and persecution, and if a religious the austerity of the religious life and the duties of his ministry; whether he showed his hope in God by ardent and pious exclamations, and raised up others to confidence in God—namely, the poor, the afflicted, the sinners; whether he desired with St. Paul to be dissolved and be with Christ, whether he bore infirmity and suffering with a joyous spirit; whether, by word or work, he showed a desire to suffer for eternal glory and rejoiced at the near approach of death. And whether he was favoured with any special grace or miracle.

The virtue of *charity* includes the love of God and the love of our neighbour. And in regard to the love of God it is asked whether the servant of God diligently observed the laws of God and the Church, and the rules of his Order, if a religious; whether he hated sin, and took every care to preserve himself free from every defect; whether by prayer and frequentation of the Sacraments he strove to blot out imperfections.* It is asked whether his mind was always fixed on God, and in union with God, and by what acts, words, or aspirations was this union made manifest; whether he often spoke of God, and showed by extraordinary signs the force of his love; if a priest, whether he celebrated daily Mass, and with what fervour; was his prayer constant and fervent; did he remain long in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; what he did when anyone gave utterance to blasphemy; did he prevent the commission of sin, and feel sorrow for it when committed by others; did he endeavour to inflame others with charity towards God; did he lead others to the practice of prayer, and how; did he by fasting and mortification bring his flesh into subjection that he might be more pleasing to God; had he a desire for affliction, contradiction

* Requiratur an S. D. Confessarii conscientiæ ejus puritatem admirati fuerint ita ut in ipso absolutionis materiam haud invenirent.

contempt, and how did he bear them. It is asked whether he meditated on the Passion of Christ and by what acts did he show his devotion to it; how did he show devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and did he endeavour with his might to excite others to praise the divine goodness. Finally, whether the servant of God was favoured with any miraculous effects of charity, ecstasy, &c.

Then, as to the *love of the neighbour*, it is asked in regard to *spiritual* works whether he prayed for the conversion of sinners; if a priest, with what fervour, assiduity and success did he exercise his holy ministry for the salvation of souls; with what frequency and fervour did he offer up prayers for the souls of the deceased; what were his relations towards his enemies and persecutors; did he forgive them, receive them meekly, return good for evil, and pray for them. It is asked whether he endeavoured to prevent discord, and whether he had at heart the character and good name of others.

As to the *corporal* works, it is enquired whether he loved the poor, whether he helped them according to his ability, and strove to induce others to assist them; whether he instructed the ignorant and gave counsel to those in doubt; whether he comforted the afflicted, admonished sinners, restored peace and concord amongst the quarrel-

some, excused the defects of his neighbours, and clothed the naked ; what was his attitude towards the sick, did he devote himself to their spiritual and physical well-being ; did he love the sick poor more than others ; did he visit and relieve those in prison.

Besides the divine or theological virtues of *faith, hope and charity* enquiry is made regarding the four cardinal virtues, *prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude.* And as regards *prudence,* the Church enquires whether the servant of God directed all his actions to the attainment of eternal glory as his last end, and if he selected the necessary and useful means to this end ; how far he endeavoured to preserve purity of conscience and a holy fear of God, and with what care he endeavoured to avoid all stain of sin ; whether he loved simplicity, was sincere and true in thought and word, and hated all duplicity and falsehood ; whether all his acts were good, and whether he first invoked divine aid for their due performance ; did he seek the advice of prudent men, and act on it, and was he ready to give counsel when asked ; had he a deep hatred of idleness as the source of vice, and did he love meditation and solitude ; did he, if a priest, show his prudence in the exercise of his ministry, and did his prudence go hand in hand with zeal.

In reference to *justice* it is asked whether he rendered unto God due honour and obedience. Also, whether he paid veneration to the saints, and by what acts he showed his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, his Angel Guardian, and his patron saints; whether he accepted the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs with proper respect and reverence, and whether he was exact in the observance of the sacred rites and ceremonies of the Church. Did he endeavour to promote the worship of God and sanctify the Sundays and holydays. Was he duly subject to his parents and superiors; was he affable towards others; did he respect the rights of all and give them what was due to them; and did he hate usury and fraud of every kind; did he show himself grateful for favours received, and strive to excite gratitude in others. It is asked also whether he discharged with justice the duties of the office committed to him, avoiding all acceptance of persons. And finally was the truth always in his heart and mouth, was he obliging towards others, and did he so temper the severity of justice with benignity that no one could ever have just cause of complaint against him.

Then, as to *temperance*, it is asked whether denial of his own will and internal mortification were characteristics of the servant of God;

whether he restrained the motions of anger and concupiscence, whether he had borne persecution with meekness and patience. It is enquired whether he had been unduly tenacious of his own opinion, had he been sparing in the use of food and drink, did he observe the fasts of the Church, and of his Order, if a religious; what was the nature of the food he used, did he indulge in long hours of sleep, and was his bed comfortable or the reverse, was he anxious to be well clothed and housed, did he neglect the comforts of life. Did he endeavour to bring the flesh into subjection by extraordinary fasts and discipline; did he mortify the senses; did he love silence and solitude; was he modest and grave in his demeanour; did he in fine show temperance in all his words and actions.

Finally, in reference to *fortitude*, it is asked whether he courageously overcame all obstacles to the glory of God and the salvation of souls; whether he constantly defended the rights of the Church and restrained the licentiousness of wicked men; was he strong and faithful in the duties of his office, indefatigable in work, patient in persecution, injury, calumnies, in trouble of mind, in spiritual dryness; had he borne all these with a joyful and cheerful spirit; was he always himself, not elevated by prosperity or depressed

by adversity; did he despise the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world, and inculcate the same feelings in others. It is asked whether he was constant and faithful in the exercise of virtue; whether he overcame the assaults of the demon, and all human respect; whether his fortitude was evident even in his last illness, indicating that he possessed the gift of final perseverance.

In addition to the rigorous examination regarding the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the four moral or cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, whenever there is question of the claims to sanctity of a man or woman who belonged to any religious congregation enquiry is also made as to the observance of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity.

And in regard to *obedience*, it is asked whether the servant of God diligently observed the precepts and rules of the Institution; whether he accepted the will of his superiors as his guide; whether all his acts possessed the merit of obedience; whether he was obedient to his spiritual directors; whether he yielded to his equals and even to his inferiors, and relinquished his own will in all things.

As to holy *poverty*, it is asked whether, in the observance of his vow, he had been content with

only those things that are strictly necessary to sustain life, with coarse clothing, a bare cell, a hard uncomfortable bed; had he refused to accept or retain everything forbidden by his vow of poverty; how he had acted in the use of money; did he possess a genuine love of poverty, and endeavour to excite this love in other members of the community.

As to *chastity*, it is asked whether, by fasting, sack-cloth and other severe discipline, he endeavoured to preserve strict purity of mind and body; whether his modesty was remarkable; did he observe custody of the senses; did he avoid the company of the opposite sex; did he fly idleness; did he condemn and correct scandals, and by what other signs did he show the possession of this virtue.

If the servant of God was not a religious, but a lay person, all the enquiries made under the headings of poverty, chastity and obedience can, as a rule, be referred to the moral virtues of justice and temperance. Under the head of the cardinal virtues and those practices connected with them an enquiry is made whether the person to be beatified possessed the habit of that virtue which would shed a lustre on his calling and state of life. "Thus justice and temperance are required in statesmen and prelates; in Popes,

zeal for the defence and propagation of the faith ; in kings, loyal attachment to the Church and the Holy See ; in married women, gentleness and devotion."

And, whether the servant of God is a religious or laic, enquiry is made regarding *humility*, whether he considered himself useless and of little account ; on what ground had he refused to accept positions of honour ; did he regard himself as a sinner ; did he rejoice that he was neglected by others, and try to excite this neglect ; did he endeavour, without affectation, to deny his own virtues and holiness, and avoid praise from others ; had his conduct been humble and gentle so that even towards subjects and inferiors he was companionable and human. Had he shown respect for the opinions of others and contempt for his own. Did he gladly undertake lowly duties, and by what other signs and actions did he manifest the humility of his character. If there is question of a servant of God who held high office or dignity the Postulator must prove his freedom from ambition, nay, he must show his aversion to the promotion, and his acceptance only in virtue of holy obedience. Some of the saints have steadily and successfully rejected all dignities, and pre-eminent amongst them are St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Borgia, St. Thomas

Aquinas. Father Faber says: "When Clement XI. was elected Pope, he refused to accept the tiara, and he was so determined in his refusal that four theologians were consulted as to whether he could continue to resist the will of the electors without grave sin. One of these theologians was the Blessed Joseph Mary Tommasi; and their answer was in the negative. Some time afterwards Clement created the Blessed Joseph Mary a cardinal; he, out of humility, refused; Clement playfully turned against the holy theologian the arguments he himself had used to force his Holiness to ascend the Papal throne and compelled Tommasi to accept the dignity."

After the examination of the virtues enquiry is next made regarding the *miracles and supernatural gifts* of the servant of God, whether, apart from his natural powers, he was endowed by God with the grace of eloquence, of knowledge, counsel, or the like; had he foretold future free events; had he healed the sick; whether he possessed a supernatural insight into the human heart; was he gifted with ecstasies and visions.

In regard to *miracles wrought after death*, it is asked if there is any evidence of curing the sick, or any remarkable occurrence considered miraculous; did God show the efficacy of his intercession by any signs or portents; was his body incorrupt, or

did a supernatural odour proceed from it. On all these matters the Process pronounces careful judgment.

The above summary, freely translated from the terms of reference of the Process, shows how thoroughly searching and rigorous is the examination of the individual virtues and miracles. It is to be noted, moreover, that the examination is not strictly confined to the points mentioned above ; additional information may be sought for and given according as may be required by the peculiar state or condition of the servant of God.

In all causes the Process on the Virtues institutes a minute enquiry into the *sufferings* of those whose beatification is under consideration. It was necessary that Christ should suffer and so enter into His glory, and the same is true in its measure of the saints. It is then a part of the work of this Process to enquire into the sicknesses of the servant of God, and the ordinary afflictions of life, the coldness and falling away of friends, the ridicule of the world, the opposition of even good men, the disfavour of those in authority ; all his trials and sufferings are closely examined, and the manner in which he bore them.

It may seem strange at first sight that holy personages should have to suffer heart-breaking tribulations from ordinarily good Christians. Yet

the fact remains, and there are innumerable instances of the opposition and suspicion of good men when there was question of the plans and modes of action of the saints. In the cause of St. Theresa it came out in evidence that she was so abandoned by everyone that nobody would even hear her confessions. St. Philip Neri was persecuted by Roman prelates, and his pilgrimages were put down to vain glory. St. Alphonsus Liguori was made the laughing stock of Naples, and at one time of his life "he was denounced from the pulpits of Rome as a warning to other self-sufficient dreamers." It is unnecessary to multiply instances. In a great multitude of cases, perhaps the majority, the saints suffered opposition and persecution from good men and prelates in authority. And this thwarting of good men is most ingeniously urged by the Promoter of the Faith as an objection against their sanctity. No writer, ancient or modern, can criticise the actions of the saints with greater severity than the Promoter of the Faith, and many an objection made by critics in the world is nothing more than a repetition of those which have been already urged with the greatest shrewdness and persistency before the Congregation. All these objections have to be answered by the Postulators to the satisfaction of the Roman

Tribunal. Sometimes they are able to show that the servants of God were the victims of calumny, and there are instances of malicious conspiracies being formed against them. But, apart from special malice of this kind, it would seem that the heroicity of a virtue renders it misunderstood by those who have not a spiritual discernment; and whilst a proportion of worldliness remains in the ordinary faithful they will find many things uncongenial and objectionable in the lives of the saints.

In the examination of witnesses before this Process it is not expected that each individual witness should give evidence on all the points upon which enquiry is to be made; it is sufficient if one witness, for example, testifies to the origin of the servant of God, another to his *faith*, or some act of *faith*, a third to his *charity* towards God and his neighbour, and so on with the rest. And sometimes the evidence of a witness is altogether confined to some unfavourable circumstance. For enquiries are always made not only in regard to those things which redound to the credit of the servant of God, but also into all matters which might be an obstacle to the final success of the cause.

The Process on the individual Virtues and Miracles may, as its title indicates, examine

miracles as well as virtues. Sometimes the examination of the miracles is confined exclusively to the special Process on the individual miracles. But, even when the miracles as well as the virtues are investigated, the enquiry into the virtues and into their heroicity forms the primary work of this Process, nor does the Sacred Congregation pronounce judgment on the miracles until a favourable decree is first issued regarding the possession of virtue in the heroic degree.

Since then the term "heroic virtue" and the corresponding one "heroicity of virtues" enter into and express the very essence of the enquiry on the virtues, it will be necessary to explain their meaning at some length. The usages of ecclesiastical language do not permit us to speak of the saints directly as heroes, for, though the numberless martyrs who despised death and gave their lives for the faith, and the confessors, who lived a life on earth not human, but angelic, must be regarded as heroes in the highest sense, yet the name of hero seems to carry with it a certain show of vain glory which is despised by holy men and condemned by the Christian religion. But their virtues must, nevertheless, be described as truly heroic, and the term has a strict technical sense in the language of writers on this subject.

What then is heroic virtue as understood by the Church ? In discussing the question theologians and canonists do not express themselves in the same way, but there is no substantial difference in the meaning. Virtue may be defined briefly " a habit of right conduct " ; and this habit may be acquired by repeated acts or may be directly infused by God. " Heroic virtue " is a habit of performing continuous acts possessing the quality of goodness in a very remarkable degree. Heroicity is described by one writer in metaphysical language as a certain excellence in an action arising from the habit of charity whereby the operations of the faculties under the dominion of the will are closely directed to an exceedingly lofty supernatural end. Perhaps the clearest and most popular definition of heroic virtue is that which describes it as a " habit of performing those good acts which exceed the mode of working followed by estimable men who live in grace and act worthily." Another writer explains heroic virtue as a quality arising from the repetition of acts of virtue which can ordinarily be performed only with very considerable difficulty. For example, in the matter of abstinence, to carefully observe the Lenten regulations would belong to the ordinary exercise of that virtue, but it would be abstinence in the heroic degree to

prolong the Lenten fast throughout the entire year.

These definitions give us but a vague idea of the meaning of heroic virtue. To understand more clearly the standard of perfection which must be attained by holy men and women before they can receive the honour of beatification it will be useful to devote attention to the usage followed by the Church in these investigations. Cardinal Lambertini, afterwards Pope Benedict XIV., is regarded as the decisive authority on this subject. In his great work on the Beatification and Canonisation of Saints he treats this question at considerable length, and explains in what consists the heroicity of each of the three theological and four cardinal virtues. For years he held the important office of Promoter of the Faith and being one of the most learned theologians of his own or any other age, his writings show a wonderful weight and wealth of knowledge. The following paragraphs, condensed from his work, give some idea of the practice of the Holy See and the principles on which it is based.

(1) Heroicity is nothing else than the excellence of the work, arising in general from the difficult and arduous nature of the work itself. In judging the excellence and difficulty of a work the circumstances must be carefully considered.

For to take an instance, if a child fasts, as was done by St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, such an act would be considered excellent, but it need not be so if done by an adult ; and in like manner the act of St. Louis, King of France, ministering to the sick in a hospital was regarded as a work of excellence, not so, however, if done by a person of humble rank.

(2) A few acts although heroic are not enough ; but to prove the existence of heroic virtue manifold actions endowed with the quality of heroicity must be performed. For virtue must burst forth into action, being called by God that talent in the Gospel which cannot remain idle ; and in the race of virtue, the saying has become proverbial that "whoever is not going forward is going backward." The length of time during which excellence of life must be manifest is not defined, but it is most strictly required that there should be numerous acts and a permanent and habitual practice of heroic virtue. In the case of St. John Francis Regis it was admitted that ten years of the greatest toil and charitable zeal spent in Apostolic missions were sufficient to justify a decree concerning his virtues without making it necessary to scrutinise the acts of his previous life.

(3) In regard to the three theological virtues,

it is not strictly required that each of them should be shown to have existed by manifold and continued heroic acts. The reason is that, from their own nature, and from God's liberality in the first infusion of them, these virtues are intimately connected with each other. The Council of Vienne teaches as the more probable opinion that the theological virtues are infused into infants as well as adults in baptism, and this opinion is now regarded as certain. Moreover, most theologians infer from the Council of Trent that infused habits of faith, hope, and charity are given in justification. Then the very nature of these virtues, for there is no account taken of a vain hope or *dead* faith, shows the inseparable connection that exists between them. Hence the heroic exercise of one of the three is taken as adequate proof, if none other is at hand, of the possession of the other two virtues. Still a special enquiry is made in regard to charity in the heroic degree, for charity is the "bond of perfection," as the Apostle testifies, it includes all the other virtues, and on the eminence of charity the splendour and eminence of the other virtues depend.

(4) The Holy See not only requires the possession of these virtues in the sense explained above, but enquires further how the person to be beatified

possessed the spirit of prayer, vocal and mental, and the practice of frequenting the sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist as most powerful means for preserving sanctity of life and advancing in perfection. And, as some of those who are canonised were sinners before they were saints, being glorious examples of repentance, the Sacred Congregation diligently enquires into the sins which sometimes occur, and the subsequent repentance by which they atoned for their past transgressions. An enquiry is also made into the bodily mortifications which were practised by the servants of God in the course of their lives.

(5) Lastly, the Sacred Congregation requires that these virtuous acts, though difficult to infirm human nature, should be elicited promptly, easily and with delight, for readiness and ease in these noble practices denote a habit of virtue already acquired. And when to these qualities are united a certain pleasure and sweetness, in all circumstances, they indicate a habit already formed and in a degree of intensity amounting to heroicity. It will be seen then that sadness and gloom and depression are utterly alien to the spirit of the saints, and when spiritual writers inculcate the duty of being glad and joyous their teaching is based on the highest authority. Mortification and suffering may weaken the body,

but they cannot impair the vigour of a soul which is earnestly striving after the ideal state of humanity. This state is attained in its perfection only in the future life, but the foretaste of it which the saints enjoy produces a joy and gladness of soul which co-exists with the greatest trials and tribulations. Heroic virtue never allows anything mean or low or deliberately evil, but at all times retains that calm joyous elevation of soul which tends with its might to the highest goodness and the following of God.

The efficiency of these rules as tests of sanctity, and the care exercised by the Church in applying them, will be better understood if some attention is directed to their application in detail. It has been stated already that the scope of the enquiry for canonisation not only includes the theological and chief moral virtues, but also that virtue which is suited to the person's particular calling or state in life. And it often happens that many of those proposed for beatification have attained to certain stages in the process and no further. This takes place not only in the case of persons of humble and obscure origin, but even with those who have all the advantages of the patronage of sovereignty and the influence of religious orders. In these investigations nothing avails but the undoubted merits of the candidate ascertained

by an enquiry founded on the eternal principles of truth and justice.

The case of Cardinal Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, is a conspicuous example. At the age of forty-six he threw up the most brilliant prospects of preferment, and entered the Franciscan Monastery at Toledo. And when, thirteen years later, he was appointed Archbishop of Toledo, he refused to accept the office until he received an express command from the Pope. Even when compelled to yield he continued as Archbishop the life of mortification and austerity of the Franciscan Order, and being admonished by the Pope to maintain the dignity of his exalted office, he hid the hair shirt of the monk under the gorgeous robes of the Bishop. The princely revenues of his See were devoted to works of charity; and his munificence as a patron of art, letters and religion, expending vast sums on churches, hospitals and schools and other works of benevolence, elicited the admiration of all contemporary historians. For many years he held the position of regent of Spain; and in times of great difficulty and danger he conducted the affairs of the kingdom with consummate ability and skill. And yet Benedict XIV. relates that, when, after his death, his beatification was proposed, the Promoters of the Faith raised the objection that

he had shown an excessive affection for his own relations. He had brought about the marriage of his brother John to Eleonora, the wealthy daughter of John Zapata, Lord of Barajas, and of his nephew, Benedict, to Benedict's cousin, to whom he gave a large dowry out of his ample revenues and possessions. To the objection raised the Postulators replied by showing that these marriages were merely permitted and not sought by him, that he hoped by these wealthy alliances to help the University of Alcala and other works of learning and religion; and that the dowries were not derived from the property of the Church, but from the ample revenues which he legitimately acquired whilst administering the affairs of the kingdom.

Again, in the case of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, who had been declared by Urban VIII. a "servant of God," it was objected that he had paid to his own relations pensions out of the revenues of the Church. And here, too, the Postulators endeavoured to meet the objection by showing that the relatives were very poor, and that the revenues of the Church may be used in moderation to provide assistance for needy relations. The Apostolic Canons and the Council of Trent declare that, if relations are poor, assistance may be given them as to the poor and without carnal

affection. But in the case of these two venerable servants of God the Sacred Tribunals were not satisfied that the bounds of moderation were not exceeded, distributive justice, which should be the special virtue of prelates, was not strictly observed, and, notwithstanding their unrivalled influence at Rome, and their undoubted merits in other respects, an indefinite postponement took place, and the honours of canonisation were denied them.

It is obvious to anyone acquainted with Christian teaching that the principles governing these examinations are not a mere arbitrary collection of rules devised by the Church, but that they are founded on the revelation made by God and preserved in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. The saints are perfect in proportion to the fidelity with which they have copied the model of our Divine Master. Their sanctity is measured by the manner in which they observed the law of God, and followed the counsels of perfection. There are those who say that it is not possible to know the degree of virtue to which a person has attained as it implies measuring the supernatural. But virtue cannot remain hidden in the heart, and must show itself in the actions of daily life. And it must be evident to any unprejudiced person that the severe and rigorous

tests of this Process are eminently calculated to find out how far the life of the servant of God has conformed to the standard of perfection revealed to us by God.

It is not contended that the precise degree of virtue reached by the saints can be measured with mathematical accuracy. The end and object of this Process is to ensure that no one will be enrolled in the catalogue of saints who has not attained the required degree of virtue. Any just person may receive from God a combination of grace, virtue and gifts, and reach a high degree of perfection, but those only are selected for canonisation who by many stages of progress have shone forth by the possession of virtue in a heroic and pre-eminent degree. And, whilst all the saints are remarkable for conspicuous and manifold excellence of life, some of them shone with greater brilliancy than others. It may be said of the saints, as St. Paul says of the just, that they differ as " star differeth from star in glory."

The Process regarding individual virtues and miracles is always confined to persons of reputed holiness who have departed this life. But it may be observed that examinations regarding the possession of sanctity are sometimes made in reference to those who are still in existence. Informal commissions are now and again appointed

to investigate the cases of living persons who enjoy a widespread reputation for sanctity of life. A dignitary of rare insight and experience may be authorised to make an examination and submit a report to his ecclesiastical superior. These enquiries are often of a protracted nature, but sometimes they come to an end with rather startling suddenness. In his remarkable work "The Psychology of the Saints" M. Joly gives somewhat amusing instances of the application of unexpected tests of sanctity. On one occasion St. Philip Neri was sent by the Pope to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Rome to enquire into the sanctity of a religious said to be favoured with revelations and ecstasies. "The weather was abominable," says M. Joly, "and Philip, who had started on a mule, arrived at the convent soaked to the skin and covered with mud. The sister was brought to him and she appeared full of sweetness and unction. By way of beginning his theological examination, Philip sat down, held out his leg, and said to her: 'Pull off my boots.' The sister drew herself up, scandalised. Philip had seen enough. He seized his hat and went back to the Vatican, to tell the Holy Father that a religious so devoid of humility could not possibly possess the graces and virtues she was credited with."

Another example of the same kind is given in a footnote :—" It seems that in our own times a similar test has been held sufficient. A certain Rose Tamisier was supposed to be favoured with extraordinary graces. A prudent ecclesiastic came to see her. 'You are the saint, aren't you,' he said to her. 'Yes, Father,' was the answer he got. The illusion was instantly detected.

Identification of the Body and Relics

The work of the Process on the Individual Virtues and Miracles is not complete until the body of the deceased servant of God and all relics and mementoes of the deceased are formally identified. This identification forms a part of the duties of the Process, and the Judges are bound, by directions given in the Remissorial Letter of the Pope, to visit the tomb, and to identify and describe the actual condition of the tomb and body of the servant of God, and also any relics or mementoes of the deceased that may still survive.

And in carrying out the duties of this visitation the Judges are bound to examine witnesses, two at the very least, regarding the precise place of sepulture and the identification of the body and

relics of the deceased, and also to inspect all documents, judicial or non-judicial, connected therewith and to incorporate them in the acts of the Process. It is their duty also to see that the experts deputed by them shall describe the body and relics minutely with all their qualities and surroundings, and to include in the acts of the Process the sworn declaration of such experts. And in no circumstances shall they permit any person, lay or cleric, of any state or dignity, no matter how exalted, to take away from the tomb, either from devotion or any other motive, any relic or souvenir of the deceased or to place any extraneous object in the tomb. Such action is prohibited under pain of excommunication, of which those present should be solemnly warned. If, on account of the dampness of the place, or from any other cause, it is found desirable to change the place of burial, permission to do so should first be obtained from the Holy See, and if such permission has not been procured everything should be replaced in precisely the same condition as before. The act of inspection is not carried out in public, but the Judges are at liberty to admit a few clerical dignitaries and distinguished lay people. The medical experts, as well as the carpenters and grave diggers, are all sworn to carry out their respective duties

faithfully. A new leaden shell is prepared to contain the remains after examination; and a metal cylinder should be in readiness to hold a suitable epitaph, which is signed by the Judges, the Sub-promoters of the Faith, and the Notary. Two medical men must be present, of whom one should be a surgeon and the other a physician.

This visitation and identification are carried through with the utmost diligence. The acts of the last recognition by the Process on non-cultus, if such exist, are taken from the archives of the Bishop and included in the present Process, in order that by comparison of the measurements, dimensions, and all other circumstances the identity of the remains may be proved beyond all possibility of doubt. Everything is most minutely described, the appearance of the body, the shroud, whether anything supernatural has been observed, and the medical men give the result of their examination in a sworn affidavit. Several sessions are held, with all the solemnities of other Apostolic Processes; all the evidence and documents connected with the Process are finally collected, and being duly signed and sealed, are sent by the accredited messenger to the Apostolic See.

All the elaborate care which the Church

bestows on the identification and preservation of the bodies of servants of God is intimately connected with the Catholic teaching that all men shall rise again with the bodies they had in this life. The resurrection of the body is an article of the Apostles' Creed, and one of the most characteristic doctrines of Christianity. It has always been the teaching of the Church, revealed from on high, that the body is an essential element of our human nature, that man, body and soul, is the work of God, and that both are precious in His sight. And in accordance with this profession it has at all times been the discipline of the Church that the bodies of deceased persons should be treated with respectful consideration. And when there is question of servants of God whom the Church is about to declare with infallible voice as numbered amongst the blessed and whose bodies will rise again to a glorious life it is fitting that their earthly remains should be regarded with especial respect and reverence. The very idea of honouring the saints implies that we should venerate their relics; and reliquaries containing authenticated relics of canonised saints are by a natural instinct of devotion everywhere treasured in Catholic houses and religious communities.

When the sessions of this Process have come to

an end, the acts and minutes are, as usual, sent to Rome for final judgment. And the discussion of the individual virtues is regarded as one of the more important discussions (*dubia majora*), of which, according to the constitution of the Congregation of Rites, only one can be proposed at the same time.

It is a noteworthy fact that the question of the virtues cannot be proposed for discussion until fifty years have elapsed since the decease of the servant of God, unless the Pope is pleased to grant a dispensation. The cause of Blessed Gabriel of the Dolours (died 1864, beatified 1908) is in our time a glorious example. And another illustrious example is St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorist Order, who was so remarkable for his writings and for the simple austerity of his life.

Before entering upon the discussion of the virtues, a very important preliminary step is necessary—that is to say, the Congregation must pronounce judgment on the validity of all the Processes, both Informative and Apostolic, hitherto held. For this purpose the Procurator, or, in other words, the legal adviser of the Postulator, prepares a summary of the Processes to be examined. The usual objections are raised by the Promoter of the Faith, to which the Postulator

replies. All the documents are collected by the Advocate of the cause, and he prepares a *statement on the validity of the Processes.* Then the Holy Father is petitioned to grant leave to have the discussion carried on at an *ordinary* meeting of the Congregation, and the question is there proposed—"*Is there satisfactory proof of the validity of the Processes constructed both by Apostolic and Ordinary authority: were the witnesses duly examined, and the legal documents properly inserted in the case and to the effect in question?*" If all the difficulties are satisfactorily answered the decree establishing the validity of the Processes is published, and the way is now open for the discussion of the individual virtues and miracles.

The question of the virtues is first discussed, and here, as in other judgments, considerable preparation is necessary. Documents are put in order, objections and replies follow, and the *statement on the virtues* is drawn up. Then the question is formulated—"*Is there satisfactory evidence that the venerable servant of God practised both the theological virtues and the cardinal virtues and those connected with them, and in the heroic degree, in the case and to the effect in question.*"

The point is discussed three times, first at what is called the ante-preparatory meeting, next at a

preparatory meeting, and finally at a general meeting. The first meeting takes place in the palace of the Cardinal Relator of the cause, and only Consulters of the Congregation are allowed to vote. The second takes place in the Vatican palace, and at this meeting only the Consulters aforesaid vote though the Cardinals of the Congregation are present and their chairman or prefect presides. The third is also held in the Vatican palace, and at this meeting the Pope presides, and both Cardinals and Consulters record their votes. For each of these meetings the advocate of the cause prepares reports, called respectively report (*positio*), new report, final report. Objections are raised by the Promoter of the Faith at each of these three Congregations, and before proceeding to the next meeting a majority of the Consulters must decide that all these objections have been satisfactorily answered. At the final meeting, the Pope presiding, a faithful narrative is given of the proceedings at the previous congregations, the final report of the Advocate is read, and the Cardinals and Consulters record their votes on the question. If the voting is favourable the Pope is asked to pronounce sentence accordingly ; but His Holiness issues no decree at this stage, but commends himself earnestly to the prayers of those present in order

that, guided by celestial light, he may decide the momentous question on its merits. If the decision of the Pope is favourable he orders, a few days afterwards, that a decree be prepared by the Secretary, which is immediately published. If the decision is adverse no decree is issued, and the silence of the Pope is accepted as his response.

It should be stated in fine that during each of the three days on which the aforementioned meetings are held the August Sacrament of the Eucharist is exposed for public adoration in the Churches of the places where the venerable servant of God lived or died.

If, as the title indicates, this Process investigates not only the virtues of the servant of God, but also the miracles worked through his intercession, the findings of the Process on the miracles must also be submitted to the Congregation of Rites for final judgment. This judgment always takes place after the judgment on the virtues, and the discussion is carried out in the same manner as that of the virtues. There is the *statement on the miracles*, which consists of the information, summary, objections and replies. If, however, the miracle is one of miraculous healing the Sacred Congregation requires not only the votes of the Consulters, as in the judgment on the virtues, but also the votes of expert physicians who give their

votes in the *interests of truth*, to use the technical language. The votes of three experts are considered carefully in the ante-preparatory meeting, and if they are regarded as insufficient other skilled physicians may be called upon to give their evidence and votes at the preparatory and general meetings of the Congregation. All the experts called upon are designated by the Cardinal Relator of the cause.

The final judgment belongs to the Supreme Pontiff, who, if satisfied, pronounces sentence that "*there is satisfactory evidence regarding the miracle or miracles.*"

Decree on the Safety (*super Tuto*) and the Transition from Beatification to Canonisation.

When the miracles have been proved, and the Supreme Pontiff has issued his decree declaring the proof satisfactory, a meeting of the Sacred Congregation is held, in which the question is debated "whether or not, given the approbation of the virtues and miracles, it is safe to proceed with the solemn beatification of the venerable servant of God." The meeting is held in accordance with the petition of the Postulator, in which he begs that the question be discussed. In the

petition are incorporated the decrees approving of the virtues and miracles, and the views of the Promoter of the Faith are also added. The question is debated once only in a general meeting of the Congregation in presence of the Pope, with all due solemnity, including public exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. A vote of the Consulters is taken, and if the majority are favourable the Pope issues a decree authorising the solemn beatification of the servant of God.

If the Postulator desires that the cause should proceed to canonisation the procedure is briefly as follows :—As has been stated in the chapter on miracles, additional miracles must have been wrought since beatification through the intercession of the beatus : two miracles if the cause proceeds by way of non-cultus, and four if by way of the excepted case, but even if only one miracle has been worked, this one may be examined, and others if they occur by a new Process. The Postulator then petitions the Pope for a Commission of the Re-assumption of the Cause, and when this is obtained a Remissorial Letter is sent with directions for the construction of the Process. The ordinary course of Apostolic Processes is then followed ; the decision of the Process is conveyed to the Sacred Congregation ; judgment is given on the validity of the Process ; the Sacred Con-

gregation discusses the findings of the Process on the miracles, and the Pope pronounces sentence. The final stage is the discussion on the security (*super tuto*) with which advance to canonisation may be made, and this discussion is held, as in the case of beatification. The decree of canonisation is then issued by the Pope, and the solemnities take place at the appointed time.

This "Decree on the Safety" may be described as the last judicial act of the Church in causes of canonisation. It is the culmination of all the Processes when everything goes well, it is the coping-stone of the wall—the final touch of the brush which completes the picture. For Catholics the long procedure is invested with a sacred character; they recognise in the movement the protecting hand of infallibility. And non-Catholics too will often admit the overwhelming nature of the evidence brought forward to establish the sanctity of those proposed for canonisation. As an illustration of the effect produced on the minds of two candid Protestants by an examination of the available evidence it is worth while repeating an authentic anecdote narrated by Monsignor Gaume. In the instance in question Cardinal Lambertini, afterwards Pope Benedict XIV., was Relator of the Cause, and as he was one day busy in his cabinet with

an enormous bundle of papers, two English Protestants called to pay him a visit. The conversation had scarcely begun when a messenger from the Holy Father brought the Cardinal an order to come immediately to His Holiness. The Cardinal begged his noble visitors to excuse him, and, engaging them to wait, said to them :— "If you like to examine this bundle you will not find the time so long." The proposal was accepted. Procedures, depositions of witnesses, accounts of miracles, all sorts of documents were ransacked, scrutinised, and pondered during the absence of the Cardinal, who was delayed much longer than he had expected. "Well," said he on his return, "what do you think of our procedures?" "If the person referred to in the documents that we have examined," answered the two Englishmen, "be not canonised, you will never canonise anybody." "Do the proofs then seem sufficient to you?" "And more than sufficient!" "We are harder to please than you. If we do not receive other evidence the case will come to nothing." And the two Englishmen went away with one prejudice less, saying aloud that the Saints of the Roman Church had no alloy in them, and that they themselves should not like to have their probity put to such a test.

CHAPTER X

The Process Regarding Miracles

The miracles proposed for beatification, and wrought after the death of the servant of God through his intercession, may be proved in three ways, by the Informative Process if the evidence in this enquiry is recognised as having the same weight as in the Apostolic Process (*in linea aequalis probationis compulsatus*), or by the Apostolic Process on the individual virtues and miracles, or lastly, by a special Apostolic Process on the individual miracles. This last Process is the one of which there is question here. But, before entering upon a description of its work and mode of procedure, it may be useful to say a word of explanation on the object of the enquiry—namely, miracles.

Religious and philosophic writers differ widely in their definitions of miracle. The Latin word *miraculum* meant in the beginning something very extraordinary though not necessarily beyond the powers of nature, thus, the " Seven wonders of the world " were known as the " Septem Miracula."

But, nowadays, the word miracle has a precise

and definite meaning, and signifies something so wonderful that it cannot be accounted for by natural causes. St. Thomas defines a miracle as an effect which is beyond the "order of the whole of created nature." And he explains later that, if a man throws up a stone in the air, such a motion is not miraculous, for though it exceeds the powers in the nature of the stone, it is produced by the natural power of man, and does not therefore exceed the power of the whole of created nature. It is commonly held that the demons cannot of their own powers change the laws of nature, and that they can do nothing in this respect unless they are used as the special instruments of God. St. Gregory in one of his letters says that miracles have been worked by the lost; and it is quite certain that miracles have been wrought by sinners. The words of Our Lord and the Apostle leave no doubt on this point. Our Lord declares that He knows not those who have done evil, though they may have prophesied in His name, cast out devils and done many wonderful works. St. Paul says in a well-known passage:—"If I have faith to remove mountains and have not charity I am nothing" (Ep. to Corinthians, Cap. XIII.). But in all cases where created beings of any kind are spoken of as working miracles, it is God alone that performs the wonder, and the

creature is merely His instrument. It follows that a miracle can never be worked for a bad purpose, such as to teach false doctrine or to propagate an unsound system of morals. And the act of a creature done by his natural powers is never miraculous. "Whatever," says St. Thomas, "an angel or any other creature does by his own power is according to the order of created nature." The word miracle then, as now understood, means a work in which there is a derogation or departure by Divine Power from the ordinary course of nature.

Moreover, there are three degrees of miracles. They may, in the language of philosophy, be against, beyond, or above nature (*contra*, *praeter*, *vel supra naturam*), for a miraculous event can exceed the powers of nature as to its *substance*, as to the *subject* in which it occurs, or finally, as to the *manner and order* of its occurrence (*modus et ordo faciendi*). A miracle exceeds the powers of nature as to its substance when the very substance of the thing is beyond its power, as the sun going back in the heavens, or the glorification of a human body. This is the highest grade of miracle.

A miracle exceeds the powers of nature as to the *subject* or recipient, as in the case of the resurrection of Lazarus, for the powers of nature can give life, but not to the dead. This is the second grade.

Thirdly, and this is the last grade of miracle, it may exceed the powers of nature as to the *manner and order* in which the effect is produced; for example, the cure of Peter's wife's mother by Christ when she was sick of a fever. The powers of nature can give restoration to health, so that here there is no miracle as to *substance;* they can even restore health in the same subject or recipient, so that in the example given there is no miracle as to the *subject;* yet there is a real miracle as to the *manner and order*, for the instantaneous cure by Christ is altogether different from the gradual effect of care and medical treatment. The one is miraculous, the other merely natural.

Besides genuine miracles there is a whole class of phenomena exhibited by spiritualists and others at the present day which demands some notice. Readers of current literature are often startled to see the hold which some new form of creed gains upon the public, to find, for example, that spiritism, theosophy, or some kindred teaching, wins a number of adherents, even amongst the enlightened classes. Various factors enter into the explanation. When faith decays amongst a people they fly to superstition. And often the spread of such doctrines is due, in great measure, to the oratorical gifts and literary ability of their exponents. But to catch public attention, and

enlist a number of followers, the persons who propound these teachings rely, in many instances, on the performance of extraordinary acts which seem to exceed human powers. Table-turning, clairvoyance, communion with the spirit world, these are some of the wonders to which they lay claim. It can be safely stated, however, that, in every instance which has hitherto attracted widespread attention, all these marvels have been clearly shown to be due either to hallucination, or, in most cases, to the unblushing fraud of those who exhibit them. The newspapers of the day supply many examples where the most shameless deceptions of this kind were openly exposed. Even if their claims to produce effects by the agency of spirits could be established such results, as the acts of created beings, could not be regarded as miraculous. And when one sees how readily the eye of the public is caught by clap-trap exhibitions of this kind, it seems such a pity that attention cannot be more closely riveted on the real genuine miracles which the Church so carefully and so lovingly unfolds to our view. To weigh and examine the evidence in support of these miracles thrills us with their reality, and opens our hearts to the wondrous lessons they teach us, lessons of homage to the Saints, of love and loyalty to Mother Church, and of the deepest

respect and reverence for the goodness and omnipotence of God.

It is to be observed, however, that miracles, prophecies, visions, ecstasies, no matter how striking and extraordinary, do not constitute sanctity. It is a widespread error—an error, too, which prevails to some extent amongst Catholics—that these marvellous phenomena are the dominating characteristic of holiness. And yet we read nothing of miracles performed by the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Baptist, eminent as they were in holiness and virtue. And some other great saints, as St. Ignatius of Loyola, have but very few miracles recorded in their lives. St. Bernard, speaking of the miracles he had wrought, said: "God worked them, not to glorify me, but for the edification of my neighbour." The essential test of sanctity is the practice of virtue carried to the pitch of heroism and perfection. Benedict XIV., speaking of heroic virtues, says: "These virtues are first and most decisive witness to sanctity; visions, prophecies and miracles are only of secondary importance, and they are absolutely ignored if proof of heroic virtues is not forthcoming." Hence in causes of canonisation no enquiry is held regarding miracles until satisfactory proof of heroic virtue is first obtained. But though the gift of miracles is not a decisive proof

of holiness the general rule is that it is conferred only on holy men and women. It is, in the language of theologians, a grace "*gratis data*," or given in order that the recipient may promote the spiritual good of others. And very often miracles are the signs by which God bears witness to the sanctity of those who perform them and to the power of their prayer. Hence the Church makes careful enquiry into their existence before any of her children are placed upon her altars.

Coming, then, to the mode of procedure, it is scarcely necessary to state that the special Process regarding miracles is always Apostolic, or constituted by the delegated authority of the Holy See. It must be instituted in all causes before the final stage of canonisation can be reached; for it must be proved that at least two miracles have been wrought by the deceased servant of God since his beatification in order to obtain the decree of canonisation. This Process must also be held for beatification whenever satisfactory proof of the required miracles has not been obtained in the Apostolic Process regarding the individual virtues and miracles. The special Process for beatification is always held after the Process for the individual virtues and miracles. It is only when the sanctity of the servant of God is established by clear and irrefragable evidence that the Holy See

authorizes the special Process for the examination of the miracles.

The number of miracles which must be proved in order that any cause may proceed to canonisation has been clearly laid down by Benedict XIV. in a decree dated 23rd April, 1741. In causes excepted by the Bull of Urban—that is to say, causes in which immemorial cultus has been established—confirmation of the cultus, or equipollent beatification may be obtained without proving that any miracle had been wrought by the servant of God. But after this equivalent beatification four miracles must have been wrought in order to obtain canonisation. The other class of causes are those which proceed by way of non-cultus. And in this class if the virtues or the martyrdom is proved by eye-witnesses two miracles are sufficient for beatification and two for canonisation. If, however, the virtues or martyrdom have been established by evidence which is not that of eye-witnesses (*testes de auditu*), four miracles are required for beatification and two for canonisation. In this class there is one other contingency possible. The witnesses in the Ordinary Process may be eye-witnesses, whilst in the Apostolic Process, owing to the lapse of time, no eye-witnesses are available. In this hypothesis three miracles must be proved for beatification and two

more for canonisation. In all causes, whether proceeding by the way of non-cultus or of immemorial cultus, the miracles required for canonisation must be wrought after beatification, and must be proved by eye-witnesses.

For the construction of this Process the first step to be taken by the Postulator is to ask the Congregation of Rites to grant a commission of delegation. With this object in view he sends to the Procurator of the Cause in the Eternal City a detailed statement of the occurrences which are regarded as miraculous in the judgment of experts, setting out all the circumstances of time, place, and persons from which it may be inferred that the event was a miracle, and that it was wrought by God at the intercession of the servant of God whose beatification or canonisation is under discussion. If, therefore, there is question of a cure which is believed to exceed the powers of nature the Postulator must in his statement (*relatio*) give the following facts :—1. The full name and address of the person cured; the particular disease from which he suffered; his physical constitution, and the constitution of his parents. 2. Whether in technical language the person was a *difficult subject*—that is to say, whether the illness was really grave and dangerous, for lighter disease and illness is utterly disregarded by the Congregation; also the year of

his age at which the disease began, how long it continued, whether it was difficult to be healed or incurable. 3. Whether medical aid was called upon, who were the doctors summoned, what treatment they adopted, and with what success ; their opinion of the disease, and the possibility of curing it by medical treatment. 4. The whole course of the disease must be minutely and accurately described in chronological order by the doctors in attendance, the cause of the disease, its development and growth, with the various symptoms, all the circumstances from the very beginning down to the time when the servant of God to whom the miracle is attributed was invoked, or his relics or image was applied. 5. By what impulse or at whose suggestion the servant of God was invoked ; what were the words used, if any, in the invocation ; whether the patient called upon any of the other inhabitants of Heaven, or whether he regained his lost health through the exclusive merits and intercession of the servant of God whose cause is in question. 6. Whether the cure was gradual or instantaneous, and whether the patient, at once or by slow degrees, regained colour, strength, energy and other signs of perfect health ; whether any vestige of the disease remains, or whether the patient was completely restored, and still continues in the enjoyment of perfect

health. 7. The opinion of doctors obtained after the cure, as to whether it was to be attributed to the powers of nature or not, and their certificates to this effect are to be sent to the Roman Congregation. The doctors giving evidence in these cases may be either Catholics or non-Catholics, they may be heretics or infidels. 8. The Postulator should state whether he can prove the miraculous occurrence by a number of *eye-witnesses ;* some witnesses of this class are always necessary for the satisfactory proof of the miracle ; and if there are also witnesses who are not eye-witnesses, this should be stated to prove the renown of the alleged miracle.

By these means the Procurator of the Cause is supplied with sufficient material for judging whether he is in a position to apply for the Apostolic Commission, and for preparing the statements and articles necessary for this purpose. If the Commission is asked for, and the Congregation grants the petition, a Remissorial Letter is sent to the Bishop of the diocese where the events occurred, and the Process is formed just like other Apostolic Processes, those changes only being made which are necessarily demanded by the subject-matter of the enquiry.

In regard to the number of witnesses called for proving a miracle at least ten are necessary, two

of whom must be official witnesses who are called by the Judge or the Promoter of the Faith. The prudent Postulator, however, will not confine himself to the number that is absolutely necessary, but will produce as many as may be required for giving complete and perfect proof of the miracle. Moreover, they must be for the most part eye-witnesses. Above all, the Postulator must be careful to call the medical men who were in attendance on the patient in his or her illness. If any of them should refuse to give evidence mention of this refusal should be made in the minutes of the Process. The doctors who are to give evidence must bind themselves on oath to speak the truth. If infidels they are sworn on their honour, if heretics they are sworn on their honour or on the Holy Gospels, according to the particular sect to which they belong; and the course adopted in administering the oath should be noted on the minutes.

Besides all these witnesses at least two surgeons or physicians of special skill are called by the Judges of the Process to make a careful examination of the person restored to health if he or she is still living. These may be called from a distance if there are no physicians of eminence in the place where the Process is held, and they must be independent men who have given no evidence in

the Process hitherto. They enquire whether the health to which the patient was restored still continues; whether any other disease succeeded which might be regarded as an effect of the previous illness; and whether there is any sign from which they may reasonably conclude that the patient might fall again into the disease from which he was said to be cured. This examination of the restored patient is prescribed in the Interrogatories of the Promoter of the Faith; and the experts are sworn beforehand to the conscientious discharge of the duty committed to them. But if there was question of any other form of miracle besides restoration to health exceeding the powers of nature the examination of medical experts would be omitted as unnecessary.

All things follow as in other Processes, and the Supreme judgment rests with the Sovereign Pontiff, who, if the decision is favourable, pronounces sentence: "That there is satisfactory proof of the miracle or miracles in the cause and to the purpose in question."

From all that has been said of the manner in which this Process carries on its work, it is clear that the Church regards the existence or non-existence of a particular miracle as a question of fact to be determined purely by evidence. There are unbelievers who deny even the possibility of

miracle, and say with Hume that it is impossible to imagine the order of nature interrupted. But, according to the definition given above, no one can consistently deny the possibility of miracles unless he is also prepared to deny the existence of God. For God is necessarily free; He freely established the laws of nature; He is their Creator, and he has the power of suspending them, and He is not bound to operate according to these laws. And though He usually works according to natural laws, He may on occasion, for wise ends of His own, make created things the instruments of effects which transcend their power. Nor does God in working miracles contradict Himself or violate any of His moral attributes such as His Truth, His Justice, His Mercy. He has never bound Himself to operate at all times in accordance with natural laws. And He has decreed from eternity the uniformity of the order of nature, and the occasional deviations from this uniformity.

There is another class who in their denial of miracle fall back on the hypothesis of unknown laws of nature. They say that we cannot know all the forces of nature, and that these alleged miracles are produced by its hidden powers. But it may be replied that it is most unreasonable and unscientific to have recourse, in order to give the reason for a certain fact, to purely hypothetical

forces, of the action and even existence of which there is absolutely no proof. These objections are generally advanced against miraculous cures. But looking into the matter more narrowly, it must be admitted that if scientific observation has established anything clearly it is that organs injured by accident or disease are not restored instantaneously. This is a law of nature, and to look for some hidden law which overturns this law is to make nature contradict itself and work spontaneously for its own ruin. Moreover, organic life consists essentially of successive generations of cellules, giving birth to others ; and this process, which exacts the assistance of time, produces the growth of the tissues of the organism and brings about their restoration when injured by disease. And it is unscientific and contrary to all reason to advance unknown forces of nature which are utterly opposed to the very basis and principle of organic life as it exists in the present creation.

The hypothesis of hidden forces of nature appears still more absurd when unbelievers in their desperate straits try to explain away the higher orders of miracle. How can unknown natural powers account for the sun's going back on the dial of Achaz, or for the duplication of the same human being ? Or taking a miracle of the second degree restoring life to a person who is dead, when

all the recognised signs of death are present, when putrefaction is already far advanced, and there is every known proof that life has departed, does it not seem pitiful that men will fall back for explanation on some secret forces of nature. The man who in such circumstances can resist Divine intervention will deny anything.

There are those, finally, who, whilst admitting the miracles of Our Lord and His Apostles, laugh at the idea that miracles are wrought by the relics and prayers of the Saints. They assume that no miracles have been wrought since the Apostles, and the Catholic belief in modern miracles excites the most bitter prejudice in their minds.

But it is hard to see how miracles wrought through the intercession of the Saints can present a serious difficulty to the intellect of a person who admits the signs and wonders of Our Lord and His Apostles. "For the most part," says Cardinal Newman, "when God begins He goes on. We conceive that when He first did a miracle, He began a series; what He commenced, He continued; what has been will be. Surely this is good and clear reasoning. To my own mind, certainly, it is incomparably more difficult to believe that the Divine Being should do one miracle and no more, than that He should do a thousand, that He should do one great miracle only, than that He

should do a multitude of less besides." The miracles of Our Lord were continued by His Apostles, and there is nothing to indicate that the gift which was given them was personal or confined to a certain definite period. On the contrary, Our Lord promises clearly that miracles would be always continued in His Church. On one occasion He makes use of these remarkable words :—" Amen, Amen, I say unto you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater than these shall he do " (St. John xvi. 11, 12). So far then from miracles being improbable in our own day, the distinct promise of Our Lord, and the harmony of God's dealing with men, suggest a probability, nay, even a certainty, in their favour. Whilst infidelity exists in the world the stream of miracles must continue to flow. God lives in His Saints, and works His wonders by them, granting them, through their heroic faith, the miraculous power of healing the sick, expelling evil spirits, and raising the dead to life.

Amongst those who are outside the pale of the Church considerable confusion of thought prevails in this most important matter ; to many it would seem as if the whole subject was mysterious, as if human reason had to be put aside and the very existence of miracle could only be accepted on the *ipse dixit* of ecclesiastical authority. They

do not understand the power by which a miracle is wrought, and at once they deny that God has intervened in doing the wonder. They deny the fact because the manner of its existence is mysterious. But, turn we where we will, we cannot escape mystery. There are mysteries of nature as well as mysteries of grace. And it would be folly to deny the existence of a truth because the imagination is bewildered in conceiving it, and we cannot understand how it comes into being. No one, no matter how well versed in science, comprehends how the rose tree clothes itself in all the glorious bloom of summer, and yet who will resist the testimony of the senses that it is an actual reality blessed with objective existence. And so in the supernatural world, the power by which Our Lord healed the sick, calmed the tempest, and raised the dead to life, is mysterious, the fact that He wrought these wonders is plain to all the world.

To the Catholic, on the other hand, miracles are facts of history and biography, and capable on evidence of the most rigorous proof. Restoring the dead to life is a conspicuous example ; and here the miracle is one which can be proved just as clearly and as easily as the natural occurrence of death itself. That we may know as certain that death has taken place it is sufficient to know that the subject once lived and now lives no longer,

and this knowledge can be acquired without any special skill or training. To prove the miracle of raising the dead to life nothing more is necessary. To be certain this wondrous transformation has taken place, all that is required is to know, as in the case of Lazarus, that the subject was certainly dead and afterwards throbbed with new given life. When these two facts are established it is borne irresistibly upon the mind that the change is wrought by the special intervention of God.

It is of Divine Faith that the miracles of Our Lord and His Apostles and all the miracles recorded in Holy Writ are true, and it is a matter of faith that miracles never cease in the Church. Beyond this every Catholic is, for the most part, free to accept or reject any professed miracle. In particular cases he may not have sufficient evidence to convince him ; he may have doubts as to the fact or its miraculousness. " I may believe," says Cardinal Newman, " in the liquefaction of St. Pantaleon's blood, and believe it to the best of my judgment to be a miracle, yet, supposing a chemist offered to produce exactly the same phenomena under exactly similar circumstances by the materials put at command by his science, so as to reduce what seemed beyond nature to natural laws, I should watch with some suspense of mind and misgiving the course of his experiment, as having no Divine word to fall back upon as a

ground of certainty that the liquefaction was miraculous" ("Grammar of Assent," p. 193).

If, however, there is question of those miracles approved for beatification or canonisation a different attitude of mind is expected from the loyal Catholic. Though the Church does not claim infallibility in these decisions still her judgments should be received by the faithful with respect and reverence. And looking to the work of the Process as above described, the numbers of witnesses examined, and their character for special skill and integrity, having regard also to the careful manner in which the evidence is afterwards sifted by impartial critics, there is no doubt but the findings of the Process are, humanly speaking, entitled to grave consideration and respect.

To show more clearly the nature of this enquiry, and the extreme care with which it is conducted, one or two particular miracles will be given in detail to which the Church has set the seal of her authority. They are taken from the Official Records of the Holy See, which are preserved in the Archives at Rome, and are open to inspection by everyone. These examples have been selected, not because the evidence in their favour is stronger than usual, but because they are of comparatively recent occurrence. The first is one of the two miracles wrought after his beatification through the intercession of Blessed Alphonsus de

BLESSED JOAN OF ARC.

Rodriguez and accepted by the Holy See for his canonisation.

It is recorded in the "Acta S. Sedis," Vol. XX., p. 475, and consisted in the instantaneous and perfect cure from cancer of Sister Mary Alphonsus Gallis, a professed nun in the Convent of Antwerp. She was examined by various medical men of the highest integrity and ability. The unanimous conclusion of these experts was that this religious was suffering from cancer, and their decision was rendered still more conclusive from the fact that the father and some other relatives of the religious died from the same malignant disease. The sickness had already progressed so far that her life was despaired of, and, when the time of dissolution was deemed close at hand, the other sisters in the convent joined her in a Novena seeking the intercession and patronage of Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez. On the last day of the Novena, December 8th, 1863, when she had received the Blessed Eucharist, she felt herself so strong that she at once rose from her bed of sickness, and, clothing herself unaided, walked with a firm step through the various parts of the convent proclaiming aloud the wondrous miracle which God had wrought in her favour. Immediately she took part in the arduous exercises performed by the other sisters of the community, and she was still in the enjoyment of perfect health in the

year 1887, twenty-four years after her miraculous escape from death. Numbers of witnesses, some of them inmates of the convent, and many residing beyond the convent walls, bore ample testimony to the reality of this miracle. No element was wanting that was calculated to bring conviction to the candid mind.

Another and very remarkable instance of miraculous power may be given which was exercised by God in the United States of America. The circumstances of the case are given at length in the "Acta S. Sedis," Vol. XXII., p. 395. This miracle is one of the two accepted by the Holy See as wrought, after his beatification, by the intercession of Blessed Peter Claver of the Society of Jesus. The beatification of this saintly Jesuit took place in the year 1857, and the miracle in question was performed in 1861, four years afterwards.

Ignatius Strecher was a pious Catholic German, who, like so many of our own countrymen, was compelled to seek a livelihood in the United States. He was employed in a soap factory in the city of St. Louis, and one day, whilst engaged at his work, he met with a dreadful accident, in which an iron bar pierced his chest causing serious injury to his breast-bone. In a short time he was found to be suffering from caries of the breast bone, a gangrenous eating away of the bony substance. This

ulceration soon spread to the ribs on the left side, and before long the lungs became affected and the invalid showed manifest symptoms of consumption. A medical examination of the sputum gave testimony of the presence of this dread disease, and the violent and persistent cough from which the patient suffered furnished further evidence in the same direction. The numerous doctors who examined him were unanimous in the belief that he was afflicted with pulmonary consumption and caries of the breast bone ; and they were unanimous also in the conviction that, from the nature and extent of the disease, there was absolutely no hope of his recovery.

In these sad circumstances the wife of the invalid, moved by the recollection of the wonders wrought through the intercession of Blessed Peter Claver, earnestly exhorted her husband to recommend himself to the prayers and patronage of the beatified Jesuit. This advice he carried out with the utmost earnestness and devotion, and, feeling somewhat stronger, he betook himself to the church of Father Weninger, where, on touching the relics of Blessed Peter, he was instantly cured. And so complete and thorough was his recovery that, without the slightest effort or inconvenience, he at once undertook the most severe labours, and continued in the same occupation for many years in the enjoyment of perfect health.

This miracle was of the most public character. Living in St. Louis, a very large city, the illness of the man was very widely known ; the severity and hopelessness of the disease were attested by many of the most eminent medical men ; and finally, his instantaneous restoration to health excited a sensational degree of interest in the locality. The ecclesiastical examination, conducted by the late illustrious Cardinal Ledochowski, took place immediately after the occurrence, when the facts were still fresh in the memory of all. Numerous eye-witnesses of every grade of society were closely examined, and their depositions carefully collected were sent off to Rome for final decision. When the evidence was thoroughly sifted by the Roman authorities it was at length decided that the recovery of the poor German workman was an undoubted miracle. It will have been seen that, in the two examples here given, one patient was miraculously cured from cancer, and the other from consumption ; and of all the diseases to which humanity is liable these are the two which seem to have most completely baffled all the efforts of human science.

An important question here arises, and it may be asked why is it that, in spite of all these signs and wonders, people go on in their ordinary course of living, and the world fails to turn to account the miraculous aid bestowed upon it. It

is not recorded that, on the occasion of these remarkable miracles, any considerable section of the population in either Belgium or America became converts to the Catholic religion. The people went along their accustomed way in pursuit of wealth and pleasure, struggling for commercial prosperity and supremacy, and for the most part utterly deaf to the supernatural voices all around them. That this spiritual torpor and insensibility should continue to prevail amongst any body of people notwithstanding the special public and miraculous intervention of God in their midst, seems an impossibility and contrary to the ordinary tendency of human nature. It would seem that, if a miracle was clear and evident, like the miracle of Josue, for example, when he made the sun to stand in the Heavens, the whole world would repent and turn from the ways of evil.

And yet there is the very highest authority for stating that such a view is utterly erroneous. In the 16th chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke we read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as set forth by Our Lord Himself. The rich man died and was buried in hell. And he implored Abraham, whom he saw afar off, that he would send Lazarus to his father's house to testify to his five brethren lest they also should come to that place of torments. "And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear

them. But he said: No, Father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead they would do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if anyone rise again from the dead." Here then it is stated, on the supreme authority of Our Saviour, that, if a man came back from the awful tortures of Hell, and appearing suddenly in the midst of his own godless relations and friends, told them, in a voice which should curdle their blood, of the anguish and suffering he had gone to inherit, even such a warning would not move them to repentance. It is no news to them that the wicked will be punished for all eternity. They will not repent even now; for those who have resisted the warnings of the prophets enforced by the miracles of the Old Testament will not be persuaded even if one should rise from the dead. This is an awful thought, a thought that is full of salutary lessons. The parable of Our Lord throws a flood of light on the question proposed above: Why is it, if miracles are so certain in our own time, that they do not produce a mighty revolution in the world?

The truth is, there exists a complete disproportion between our weak fallen nature and the tendencies and aspirations of the supernatural. And such is the corruption of the human heart, that when once hardened by evil habits and the

indulgence of wicked passions it is almost impossible to change it. When our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead the miracle was public, evident and widely known, and yet the Pharisees were not converted by it. So far from being converted they even entered into a design to put Lazarus to death in order to get rid of a man who was a living witness and reproach to their incredulity. In the same wicked spirit they attributed other miracles of Our Saviour to magic, to the prince of darkness, to the fraud of His disciples. And, looking round upon the world to-day, do we not see malefactors severely punished sometimes with the death penalty, and yet this does not prevent the commission of fresh crimes? Every day we see persons continuing to lead lives of extravagance, of drunkenness, of sensuality, with all the sad inevitable consequences of their wickedness staring them in the face. It is too much then to expect that the miracles of our own day would produce immediate and visible results of a revolutionary character when no such effects are recorded as arising from individual miracles of Our Lord Himself.

But, though miracles are not all-sufficing, they are extremely useful and valuable in the supernatural order. *Miracula pro infidelibus* has become an axiom in the language of the Church. Miracles give the proper sanction and ratification to the

preaching of Divine revelation. But to those who have accepted the Faith additional means of grace are essential for the due observance of the law. Communion with God, the Holy Sacraments of the Church, humble and persevering prayer, these are some of the other aids to which the faithful must have recourse in the ordinary dispensation of Providence.

The Church will, at all times, continue to fulfil her Divine mission and preach the Gospel to fallen humanity. And the miracles worked by her children in every age and clime will be held up to the world as a beacon leading the erring ones to the harbour of Salvation. Though the conversion of the world is not yet, it is no argument against the existence of miracle. Grace works in secret, and its effects are often hidden from the sight. The Spirit breathes where He wills and mankind will be converted in the appointed time. Meanwhile, we must admire the marvellous wisdom and care with which the Church conducts the enquiries into the existence of miracles. Looking at the matter from the purely human point of view, and abstracting altogether from the promise of the Holy Ghost to preserve His Church from error, it seems impossible for the honest enquirer to resist the force of the evidence in favour of those miracles which have been sealed with the approbation of the Holy See.

CHAPTER XI

The Excepted Case

All causes of canonisation may be divided into two classes—those which proceed by the ordinary way of non-cultus, and those which are carried through by the provisions of the excepted case. To the first class belong the causes of all the servants of God who have never been honoured by public ecclesiastical worship. These form the vast majority of causes of canonisation, and the procedure described in this chapter has no reference whatsoever to them. The servants of God who have received public veneration belong to the second or exceptional class, and to this class exclusively the present Process has application. Equipollent or equivalent beatification is intimately connected with this Process, for all those servants of God, and those only who proceed to beatification by way of the Excepted Case, receive, if the final judgment is favourable, equipollent beatification. In other words, the cultus with which they are already honoured is authorised by the Holy See on proof of one or more of the exceptional conditions stated in the

Bull of Urban VIII. There is no other enquiry in the case of these servants of God; if immemorial cultus is judicially proved they proceed at once to beatification.

It may be asked what is the use of the approbation of Rome if they are already in receipt of public and legitimate veneration? The answer is that equipollent beatification strengthens and enlarges the cultus they are receiving and opens the way to canonisation. The Order of St. Dominick, for example, could not celebrate the feasts of Blessed Reginald, or Blessed Andrew Avellino. The Order applied to Rome petitioning the recognition of the immemorial honour rendered to these holy personages. Their causes were duly investigated, it was proved that they enjoyed public religious honour since 1524, over a hundred years before the Bull of Urban, and the Holy See permitted their feasts to be celebrated with a proper office and Mass.

Who are the servants of God of whom there is question in this Process, and why are they regarded as an exceptional class? For answer we must refer to the celebrated Decrees of Urban VIII., the first, published in 1625, and the second, confirming it, published in 1634. These decrees prohibit public and ecclesiastical worship to be shown towards servants of God who are not

beatified or canonised, with the exception of those who were the objects of a cultus arising either "out of the general consent of the Church, or a custom of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary, or the writings of the Fathers or of holy men, or the long and intentional tolerance of the Holy See or the Ordinary." These words supply a clear answer to both questions, and, though the servants of God excepted in the decree may be either martyrs or confessors, it is clear from the conditions laid down that they must be comparatively few in number. The Decree of Urban gives several exceptions from the law prohibiting cultus—namely, those who have received religious honour, by the general consent of the Church, or those who have received it by a custom of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary, or those who are the objects of a cultus against which there was no remonstrance in the writings of the Fathers or holy men, or finally, those who received honour by the long and continued tolerance of the Holy See or the Ordinary. But, of all these, by far the most commonly occurring exception is the case of cultus from time immemorial, and the Excepted Case always refers to immemorial cultus, unless the contrary is evident from the context. This cultus, as defined in another part of the Decree,

must exceed in duration a period of a hundred years, and must therefore have commenced on or before the year 1525 or a hundred years before the Bull of Urban was issued.

The Process regarding the Excepted Case has a close analogy with the Process of non-cultus. Cultus or public honour is the object of enquiry in both. But, whilst in the Process of non-cultus the end in view is to show the absence of religious honour, the purpose of the Process in the Excepted Case is to show that the servant of God was the recipient of public veneration. It must be proved too, first, that this cultus extended back a hundred years before the Bull of Urban, and, according to the ancient decrees, confirmed by a decree of Pius IX. issued in 1868, it must also be juridically proved that this cultus continued without notable interruption down to the time when the Judge of the Process pronounces sentence.

The enquiry regarding the Excepted Case may be conducted either by Episcopal or Apostolic authority. In former times it was customary to establish the Process after the Introduction of the Cause, and in this case the enquiry was Apostolic. But more recently the custom has long obtained of constructing the Process by Ordinary authority.

The first point to be determined by the Court is the existence of cultus, and the recognised

proofs of this cultus were somewhat as follow:—That the body of the servant of God was solemnly raised from the tomb—that it was exposed for public veneration—that it was placed under the table of an altar, and according to the Bollandists such exposition for the public veneration of the faithful was regarded as solemn canonisation—that the name of the servant of God was invoked in public supplications—that his image was given in painting or in sculpture with an aureole or rays round the head, the former being proper to a saint, the latter to a person beatified—that anniversaries were celebrated in his honour—that oratories were built to him—that he was regarded as the patron of a city or state—that honour was rendered to him with the knowledge and tolerance of the Holy See or the Ordinary—that votive tablets were attached to his sepulchre, candles lighted, or incense offered there—that public prayers were said to obtain his intercession—that an office was recited in his honour or Mass celebrated—that the title of Blessed or Saint was given to him in public statues, writings, or monuments, or any other signs of ecclesiastical cultus. It is not necessary that all these proofs should be adduced in every single instance, but it is essential that it should be shown beyond all possible doubt that he began to receive public religious honour as early as

1525, and that this cultus was continued without moral interruption to the close of the enquiry.

The number of witnesses in this Process should be at least eight or ten, besides those called officially by the Judge or by the Fiscal Promoter.* Nor is it sufficient that they should testify to the honour paid to the servant of God at the time of the examination, but they should be able to give evidence as to past cultus, what they remember, what they have heard from their ancestors, and what has come down to them by tradition, whether favourable or otherwise. Hence witnesses should, as far as possible, be persons of judgment and responsibility, and well versed in the history of their country. And since the evidence must show that religious honour reached back to the year 1525 and was continued through the ages to the close of the enquiry it is generally necessary to produce historical documents to supply adequate proof. And hence provision is duly made for taking authentic extracts from the works of recognised historians, and from ancient manuscripts preserved in libraries and museums. In like manner, experts are called into requisition to show the exact meaning and weight to be attached to paintings, statues, tablets, oratories, and monuments of every kind, and, as far as possible,

* *Fornari*, p. 222.

pictures or copies of these are to be inserted in the records of the Process.

Finally, the Court visits the tomb of the servant of God and examines any signs of religious honour to be seen there. And if the body is regarded as incorrupt, or if an odour proceeds from it which is considered supernatural, skilled surgeons and physicians are called who give their opinion under oath on these important points. Then the Judge, having carefully considered all the arguments favourable and unfavourable, solemnly pronounces sentence, and declares, if he can do so before God, that religious honour was paid to the servant of God from time immemorial, and that it continued to the date of the sentence. The solemnities required for all Ordinary Processes must be carefully observed at every stage of the work; and the official duties of this Process are complete when a signed and sealed copy of the acts is sent by the accredited Bearer to the Congregation of Rites.

The Judgment of the Process, together with the evidence on which it is based, is afterwards reviewed at an ordinary meeting of the Congregation; and if the decision is favourable, a Decree of Confirmation is issued and the servant of God is equivalently beatified. Equipollent beatification is not celebrated with the ceremonies of ordinary beatification.

CHAPTER XII

On the Cause of Martyrs

As has been already observed, the various divisions of saints may be included under the two heads of martyrs and confessors. Martyrs were the saints who first received religious honour from the Church, this honour being afterwards extended to those who were confessors of the faith. In investigating claims to canonisation the Church makes a wide distinction between the martyrs, and those who, not being martyrs, belong to the broad division of confessors. In the Processes hitherto described there has been question chiefly of confessors, and to complete the subject it is necessary to say a special word on the causes of martyrs.

At the outset it will be useful to explain the theological meaning of the word, *martyr*, and to draw attention to some points of Catholic teaching on martyrdom. Etymologically, the word "martyr" means "witness," and, in the earlier ages of the Church, the title of martyr was given to persons who were distinguished witnesses for Christ. Later on, the term was restricted to

persons who were put to torture for the sake of Christ. But, according to modern usage, and almost from the very beginning, the word has a much more limited meaning in the Christian Church. Theologians define martyrdom to be: "Passio mortis vel cruciatus lethalis pro fide Christi aut vera virtute"; "the undergoing of death or sufferings which would naturally result in death for the faith of Christ or for some virtue which Christ taught." This definition, which is full and accurate, is gathered from a consideration of the various cases in which the title is bestowed by the Church. To earn the crown of martyrdom it is not necessary that a person should suffer death *directly* for Christ, it is sufficient to die for the preservation of some virtue taught by Christ. Thus, St. Thomas of Canterbury is held to be a martyr, though he suffered death in defence of the immunities of the Church. In like manner to be a true martyr it is not necessary that death should follow immediately on the torture inflicted, it is sufficient if the sufferings issue in death. Thus St. Marcellus is a martyr; he died worn out by the prolonged menial labours to which he was condemned. And so too if the torture borne in a rightful cause is sufficient to cause death, but the victim is preserved by miracle, this does not deprive him of the martyr's title and reward.

St. John the Evangelist is numbered amongst the martyrs, though he did not literally shed his blood; when thrown into a caldron of boiling oil at Rome he was saved by miraculous intervention, and God gave him back the life he had laid down.

The subject of martyrdom has inspired writers of every age and clime with the loftiest sentiments of admiration and reverence. During the persecutions of the first three centuries all contemporary writers, pagan as well as Christian, record that large numbers of Christians, preferring death to apostasy, sealed their faith with their blood, and that many of them suffered martyrdom in circumstances of the utmost heroism. The Church always regarded the day of martyrdom as the natal or birth day of the martyr, the day on which, every stain of sin being blotted out, he was born into eternal life. This is the grand idea that runs through all that is written of the martyrs. St. Fulgentius, in his discourse on St. Stephen, the first martyr, says: "To-day we celebrate the triumphal suffering of the soldier of the King; to-day the soldier going forth from the tabernacle of the body enters Heaven in triumph." And the poet Ben Jonson, singing the praises of the martyr, says :—

"Who falls for love of God shall rise a star."

The courage and constancy of these heroic sufferers strengthened the faith of the brethren, and won from them the highest admiration and reverence. It was deemed a special honour and privilege to receive their blessing, to converse with them, to visit them in prison. Religious honour was paid to them immediately after death ; their graves were visited for the purpose of asking their intercession ; their bodies, clothes, books, were treasured as relics, and their feast days were celebrated with special religious services. No wonder St. Augustine observes that the persecutions of the faithful in the early times, so far from hurting the Church, were useful to it, and helped to propagate the Christian religion. There can be no doubt of the salutary influence of those who were witnesses in blood to the faith that was in them, and it has always been regarded as an axiom that " the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the faith."

It is a dogma of faith that martyrdom supplies the place of baptism, blotting out original and actual sin and all the punishment due to sin. In accordance with this doctrine, catechumens who died for the faith before baptism were genuine martyrs, being baptized, as St. Cyprian says, " with the most glorious baptism of blood." Furthermore, it is the teaching of the Church,

based upon revealed truth, that any defects or shortcomings in the lives of martyrs were atoned for and blotted out by the actual fact of martyrdom

A little consideration of these Catholic truths will enable us to understand at once the points of difference between the enquiry in case of martyrs and the enquiry in regard to confessors. The essential difference is that proof of genuine martyrdom in martyrs is regarded as equivalent to the proof of heroic virtue in confessors.

How is the fact of martyrdom proved in regard to those who are placed on the roll of martyred saints ? In the earlier ages of the Church there was, as has been stated already, no judicial enquiry before religious honour began to be paid to the deceased. The Church was a little flock, and the fact of martyrdom and its cause were public and notorious ; hence there was but little danger of error or abuse. We have seen how with the lapse of ages and growing necessities of the times the discipline of the Church was gradually changing, until the present system was finally elaborated.

What then is the mode of procedure in causes of martyrs at the present day ? Martyrs, like confessors, may proceed to canonisation either by way of " the Excepted Case " or by way of non-cultus. If the former the enquiry, as explained

in the preceding chapter, is confined exclusively to the religious honour paid to the deceased.

But the vast majority of causes of martyrs proceed by way of non-cultus, and in these the same Processes are held that have been already described in causes of confessors. The Church, however, makes some concessions in causes of martyrs, and the examinations are not all conducted with the same rigorous severity observed in causes of confessors. The reason for this relaxation is that it is much easier to prove the fact of martyrdom than to prove the existence of heroic virtue.

In regard to the Informative Process it sometimes happens that extra-judicial declarations of Bishops and statements which they have collected from other witnesses are accepted by the Congregation instead of the regular findings of this Process. Occasionally this modification becomes a necessity, for Christians are often put to death in distant and uncivilised regions, as in China, where material cannot be found for the formation of the Informative Process. In causes of martyrs the Informative Process enquires not into the reputation for sanctity and miracles, as in the case of confessors, but into the reputation for martyrdom, for the cause of martyrdom, and for miracles or signs. The word "signs" here has a technical

meaning. It signifies, not a miracle wrought through the intercession of the martyr, but some miraculous occurrence by which God illustrates the martyr's death, as, for example, a bright light surrounding the body of the martyr, or a supernatural odour proceeding from the wounds inflicted. In causes of martyrs there is no Process regarding virtues, nevertheless it is desirable and conducive to ultimate success that both in this Process and in the Apostolic Process on the cause of martyrdom some evidence should be given on the virtue of the servant of God, and especially on the manner in which he prepared for the final act of martyrdom.

The Process regarding non-cultus sometimes differs somewhat from the same Process in causes of confessors. In causes of confessors the Judge is required to visit the grave of the servant of God, and satisfy himself as to whether there are any signs there that religious honour has been paid to the deceased. But in the case of martyrs it is often difficult for any Christian to obtain access to the grave. In these circumstances the Postulator must procure the best evidence available to show that no public honour has been paid to the servant of God; and the very difficulty of approaching the grave is an argument that the Decree of Urban VIII. has been observed.

In these causes the Process on the reputation for martyrdom is generally omitted; the Pope readily grants a dispensation to this effect.

In all enquiries regarding martyrdom it is obvious that by far the most important of all the Processes is the "Apostolic Process regarding Martyrdom and the Cause of Martyrdom." This Process holds the same position for Martyrs as the Apostolic Process on the virtues in causes of confessors. It has always been regarded as an axiom that it is the cause, not the death, that makes the martyr. For this reason the examination in this Process is occupied chiefly with the cause for which the servant of God underwent the death penalty. Two points have to be juridically proved—first, the violent death of the martyr considered as a material fact; and secondly, the cause of the martyrdom—that is to say, that the servant of God was put to death on account of his faith. The first point is, as a rule, easily established; but the second presents features of grave difficulties, especially in civilised countries, where religious and political motives are often intermingled in the minds of the oppressors. The Process therefore enquires most carefully into the cause for which the oppressor inflicted death on the servant of God; whether the supreme penalty was inflicted for the faith, for

some dogma or precept of faith, or for some virtue taught by Divine revelation. Enquiry is also made as to the manner in which the servant of God underwent the death penalty; how he prepared himself for the supreme trial; whether he suffered voluntarily, patiently, not for the desire of human glory, or through any unworthy motive, but for a supernatural purpose, being prepared to die rather than offend his Creator.

When the work of this Process is complete the acts and minutes are conveyed in the ordinary way to Rome, and in three congregations or meetings the question is discussed: Is there sufficient evidence of the martyrdom and the cause of martyrdom in the case and to the effect in question? This is the usual course; but, as causes of martyrs are carried through more rapidly than those of confessors, it is sometimes permitted that the question on the miracles and signs should be discussed in Rome at the same time as the question on the martyrdom. This course was actually adopted in the cause of Venerable Andrew Bobola.

In regard to the other Processes in the enquiry concerning martyrs it may be said that they do not differ materially from the corresponding ones in causes of confessors. But as the scene of the sufferings of those who die for the faith is often

found in distant and barbarous countries certain modifications of the usual discipline become necessary in order to carry out the enquiries ; and on just cause being shown these concessions are granted by the Holy See. With these exceptions the investigations in causes of martyrs are carried out with all the strict rigour observed in the causes of confessors.

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It is interesting to note in this connection that a number of our own countrymen who suffered death under the penal laws of the last three or four centuries are undergoing examination with a view to their ultimate canonisation. In their cause, as in that of most martyrs, the chief difficulty is to show that they suffered for the faith. It is objected that they were punished, not for religious, but for political reasons. For there are historians who assert that a scheme of state policy underlay and prompted the penal code in Ireland ; and that the object of the penal legislation was to gain the allegiance of the Irish people and reconcile them to English rule.

To this line of argument it is replied that the legislation against the Catholic faith in Ireland was almost identical with the code framed against the Church in England. And since it can hardly

be maintained that the persecution of Catholics in England was carried on for political purposes, neither is it necessary to look to politics for explaining its extension to Ireland.

Besides, even if it is admitted that English rulers wished to increase their own power and secure political advantages by forcing the Irish into the English Church, it is nevertheless true that those who suffered under the penal laws in that dark period of our history were put to death for their religious convictions. Every text of the penal laws shows that no matter what the ulterior motives in the minds of statesmen may have been the Catholics of Ireland were punished for their faith. In the earlier years of the persecution they suffered, as every student of history knows, for their belief in the Catholic doctrine that the Roman Pontiff is the supreme head of the Church of Christ; and if Irish Catholics rejected the headship of the Pope and accepted the teaching of royal supremacy in matters ecclesiastical they were offered life and liberty. The Act of Supremacy was passed by the Parliament of Dublin, in 1537, and is as follows :—" The King, his heirs and successors, Kings of England and lords of Ireland, shall be accepted and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the whole Church of Ireland " In the next session another Act was

passed against the authority of the "Bishop of Rome":—"Any one commanded to take the said oath 'that he accept the King to be the only supreme head of the Church of England and Ireland,' obstinately refusing to do so, shall suffer the pain of death and other penalties in cases of high treason." The very words of these enactments show that the persecution which Irish Catholics had to confront was directed avowedly against their faith.

The same is true of the other penal laws passed during these centuries of cruel persecution. And, as in the earlier centuries, though the Roman Emperors were actuated by motives of state policy, still those who suffered under their laws directed against the Church were genuine martyrs, so, in our own country, whatever may have been the ulterior motives of legislators, religion was distinctly the offence punished, and those who shed their blood according to the penal laws seem entitled to the martyr's crown.

The cause of Venerable Oliver Plunkett, the saintly Archbishop of Armagh, is more advanced than that of the other Irishmen who suffered under the penal laws. The Apostolic Process on the martyrdom and cause of martyrdom was brought to a conclusion at the beginning of the year 1908, and the acts and minutes were sent

forthwith to the Sacred Congregation of Rites for final decision. His Eminence Cardinal Logue, the venerated successor of Oliver Plunkett in the See of Armagh, was the presiding Judge, and the work of the Process occupied about fifty sessions. Amongst the witnesses in this Process was the Most Rev. Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam, who gave evidence as an expert in historical research. The Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, was engaged, by special commission, to examine Lord Chief Baron Palles and another eminent Dublin lawyer on some judicial aspects of the cause.

The life and death of Oliver Plunkett must possess intense interest for every Irishman and Catholic, and a few of the more striking events are appended. He was born at Loughcrew, near Oldcastle, in Co. Meath, in the year 1629, just two hundred years before the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed. He was a near kinsman of the Earl of Fingall, of Lord Dunsany, and of Lord Louth, and, on his mother's side, he was related to Dillon, Earl of Roscommon. In the summer of 1645 he made the journey to Rome; and, in the Irish College founded there twenty or thirty years before, he received his ecclesiastical training. His career in the College was most successful, as we can gather from the testimony

of Father Edward Locke, S.J., who later became rector of the College, and bears witness that Oliver Plunkett " in this our Irish College, devoted himself with such ardour to philosophy, theology and mathematics, that in the Roman College of the Society of Jesus he was justly ranked amongst the foremost in talent, diligence, and progress in his studies . . . and everywhere at all times he was a model of gentleness, integrity and piety." The reputation which he had acquired as a theologian secured for him after his ordination the appointment of Professor in the College of the Propaganda. He was nominated to the See of Armagh in July, 1669, though several other names were proposed to the Pope ; and he was consecrated Bishop in Ghent on the 30th November, 1669.

Oliver Plunkett has been fortunate in having as his biographers two most distinguished men—Rev. George Crolly, of Maynooth, and Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, both of whom had uncles who were his successors in Armagh. These biographers tell us of his burning zeal for the salvation of his people, how in the first four years of his episcopate he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to forty-eight thousand six hundred persons. They point to his noble efforts to educate the young ones of his

flock, his eagerness to fill up the broken ranks of the clergy, his success in correcting abuses which had crept in during the strife of persecution, visiting nearly every diocese in his province, and holding synods in Dublin, Clones and Ardpatrick. And during all the years of his primacy his yearly income did not exceed sixty pounds, and his episcopal palace was a little thatched cottage in an obscure part of the diocese!

After a period of ten years in the episcopate, during which he showed the most ardent zeal, mortification, courage and patience, the saintly Prelate was arrested, and cast into prison in Dublin Castle on the 6th December, 1679. His life was a model of the charity which Christ came to cast upon the earth; and now the end was near. The touching words of Lowell may well be applied to him:—

> He strove among God's suffering poor
> One gleam of brotherhood to send;
> The dungeon oped its hungry door
> To give the truth one martyr more,
> Then shut,—and here behold the end!

He was first put on his trial in Dundalk, but the informers, two priests who imitated the crime of Judas, knew they would not be believed there and failed to appear against him. In the following summer he was removed to London, and, in the

beginning of the year 1681, he was arraigned before a London jury. The perjury of the witnesses at the trial was so flagrant that, in spite of the outrageous partisanship of the judge, Chief Justice Pemberton, the jury refused to find a true bill against him. But a new trial was obtained at the following Easter term and he was condemned to death. The indictment was for high treason, but there is extant a minute record of the trial, published with the imprimatur of Judge Pemberton, which makes it abundantly evident that the only treason of the holy Archbishop was his zeal in defence of the Catholic faith.

Oliver Plunkett was executed at Tyburn, in the reign of Charles II. on the 1st of July, 1681, (11th July according to the new style). It is worthy of note that he was the last to shed his blood for the faith in England. The manner in which he prepared to meet his death was truly edifying, and is thus described by his fellow-prisoner, the Benedictine Fr. Corker, who was his confessor and spiritual guide at the last. "He spent his time in almost continual prayer; he fasted usually three or four days a week with nothing but bread. The trial being ended . . . not only I but many other Catholics who came to receive his benediction and were eye-witnesses, can testify, there appeared in his words, in his

actions, in his countenance, something so divinely elevated, such a composed mixture of cheerfulness, constancy, love, sweetness and candour as manifestly denoted the Divine Goodness had made him fit for a victim, and destined him for Heaven. His love had extinguished in him all fear of death . . . and he continually studied how to become more and more an entirely pleasing and perfect holocaust."

At the place of execution the venerable prelate spoke at some length, refuting the charges against him, and forgiving, like his Divine Master, the false witnesses who had spilled his innocent blood, and all who concurred in any way to take away his life. He asked forgiveness of all those whom he had ever offended by thought, word or deed, and ended thus :—" Now that I have shown sufficiently (as I think) how innocent I am of any plot or conspiracy, I would I were able with the like truth to clear myself of high crimes committed against the Divine Majesty's commandments, often transgressed by me, for which I am sorry with all my heart, and if I could or should live a thousand years, I have a firm resolution and a strong purpose, by your grace, O my God, never to offend you. And I beseech your Divine Majesty, by the merits of Christ, and by the intercession of His Blessed Mother, and all the

Holy Angels and Saints to forgive me my sins and grant me eternal rest."

When he expired he was cut down and bowelled; his heart and bowels were thrown into the fire. His body was begged of the king, and was interred, all but the head and arms, in the churchyard of St. Giles. Four years afterwards it was found entire, and sent to Lambspring in Germany. Later it was brought back and now finds a resting-place in the Benedictine Monastery of Lambspring in England. His head was given to Cardinal Howard, and it now rests in the Dominican Convent of Drogheda, the first Superior of which was a grand-niece of the martyr.

There is no member of the Irish Church, from the humblest Catholic in the land to the Primate of all Ireland, Cardinal Logue, who does not look forward with eager interest to the success of the cause, and pray that this saintly prelate may be found worthy to have his name inscribed on the venerated roll of martyred saints.

CHAPTER XIII

Ceremonies of Beatification and Canonisation

BEATIFICATION, as we have already seen, is an act by which the Church declares, though not in a final and definitive manner, that a deceased servant of God, after a life full of virtue and merits illustrated by miracles, enjoys eternal felicity with God in Heaven. In canonisation too the Church declares that the deceased servant of God is a saint, but here, as has been shown, she speaks with infallible voice, and her decision cannot be called into question. In both cases the decree of the Church is concerned with the public ecclesiastical veneration of an individual. The religious honour to be given to the person who is beatified is merely permitted and is restricted to certain liturgical exercises. But the honour to be paid to the saint has a more extensive liturgy, and is made of precept to the Universal Church.

Such being in general the deep import of these acts of the Church it is natural to expect that

they would be accompanied with striking and significant ceremonial. And nothing can equal in splendour the solemn ceremonies of these august functions. A vast crowd is always present, and the manifestation of faith of a great Christian multitude is added to the costly decorations which set off with such harmonious effect the glorious architectural proportions of Saint Peter's.

The first beatification which took place in the Vatican Basilica was that of St. Francis of Sales in 1661. From that date down to the 20th May, 1906, when the Dominican Martyrs of Tonchino were beatified, ninety-two beatifications were made in the Basilica, and altogether one hundred and thirteen have been solemnized since St. Francis of Sales was declared blessed.* During the Pontificate of Leo XIII., after the capture of the Eternal City by the Italian forces, it was decided that a change should be made, and that solemnities of this kind should be held in the vast hall of the Loggia above the portico of the Vatican Basilica, but, at the canonisation of Blessed Antonia Maria Zaccaria and Blessed Fourier, in 1897, the ancient custom was revived, and now all beatifications and canonisations take place in the Basilica itself.

* *Corriere d'Italia*, 18th May, 1908.

Ceremony of Beatification.

In the function of beatification the sacred rites are carried out on a scale of lesser solemnity than that observed in canonisation. The Pope is not, as a rule, present in person, the apse only of the Church is decorated, and the procession is less imposing. Nevertheless the decoration is carried out with a splendour and magnificence which is only surpassed on the supreme occasion of canonisation. The whole scheme is entrusted by the Postulator of the Cause to an architect of distinction, who takes counsel with the Curator of St. Peter's and with one of the Canons of the Vatican Basilica. The following are some of the principal features in the plan of ornamentation as carried out at the present day :—

At the centre of the "glory" which crowns the chair of St. Peter there is hung a painting of the beatified, which, assuming that the decree of beatification has been issued, represents him as being borne up to Heaven by Angels. In this picture the Beatus is depicted with shining rays proceeding from the head as centre. These rays are peculiar to paintings of beatified persons, and the aureola, or golden crown surrounding the head in the form of a circle, can be used only in paintings of those who have received the honours

of canonisation. The central idea which the picture is meant to convey consists in this, that the Beatus is in the company of the blessed in Heaven ; and this being the intention the painting is covered with a suitable veil until the decree of beatification is read, and the Pope has formally declared that the beatus is in the enjoyment of celestial glory. It is also customary to place a somewhat similar representation of the blessed one on the façade or front elevation of the Basilica ; this painting was also veiled, and was exposed to view at the same time as the one placed in the interior.

Relics of the newly beatified are exposed for public veneration on the Altar upon which the Holy Sacrifice is to be offered. They are placed in a silver urn, resting on a gilt framework, and so arranged that they can be conveniently seen by those who are assisting at the ceremony. On this occasion also the body of the person to be beatified is sometimes exhumed and proposed for the veneration of the faithful after the Brief of Beatification is published.

Suitable seats are arranged in the Basilica for the ecclesiastics and distinguished laymen who assist at the solemn ceremony. On the Gospel side of the Altar of St. Peter's chair, benches, bright with purple and gold, are placed for the

Cardinals of the Congregation of Rites. Behind these are raised seats or tribunes for Archbishops, Bishops and Dignitaries, as well as for the Consulters of the Congregation of Rites. Facing the Altar sits the Cardinal priest of the Vatican Basilica with the whole chapter. Special galleries are reserved for strangers of distinction, for kings and queens, for princes and princesses, for the family of the person to be beatified, if any are present, also for the members of the Religious Order to which he belonged, if a religious, and for other persons of note.

At the remarkable beatification of Blessed Gabriel of the Dolours, which took place 1st June, 1908, a distinguished assemblage was present. Blessed Gabriel died February 27th, 1862, and his brother was present at his beatification—an incident which is probably without parallel in the whole history of the Church. The *Corriere d'Italia*, describing the solemnities, says: "A very large multitude assisted at this morning's ceremony. On the benches of that part of the Church reserved for ecclesiastics, flanking the Altar of the Cathedral, were seated the most illustrious Cardinals Rampolla, Cagiano, Vives, Cretoni, Respighi, Martinelli, Gennari, Segna, Gotti, Ferrata, Mathieu. Behind the eminent Cardinals, in other benches, were Mons. Jario,

Vicar of the Vatican Basilica, together with the other prelates. In one tribune we observed the brother of the newly beatified, Doctor Enrico Possenti, born in Cingoli 11th August, 1835, doctor of the first rank in the town of Camerino, as well as other relatives, and his spiritual father. In other tribunes were the sisters of the Pope, the religious of the Passionist Order, and ladies and gentlemen of the Roman aristocracy."

The Altar and the whole apse are very richly adorned. The eyes are dazzled by a perfect blaze of light issuing from candelabra and chandeliers with pendants of cut glass. The most brilliant lustres are suspended through the apse forming a circle round the picture of the blessed one. The pillars all around are hung with large festoons of the richest silk and velvet fringed with gold. Tapestries of priceless value, the work of the most renowned artists, lend additional splendour to the scene. On various columns and pilasters are displayed banners and standards with exquisite paintings depicting the miracles approved for the purpose and effect of the beatification. In like manner the miracles as well as the sublime virtues of the person to be beatified are recalled by short Latin inscriptions in letters of gold suitably displayed on the pillars of the Basilica. The following epigraph, one of a number shown

on the occasion of the beatification of Blessed Gabriel, will serve as an example :—" *Beate Gabriel—hodie Coelitum honores adeptus—tot juvenes miserrime ruentes—mentis errore voluptate cordis—tuam in fidem recipe.*"

Not only is the sense of sight gratified by the harmonious blending of light and colour, but at regular intervals are displayed the most costly vases filled with the choicest flowers which yield the sweetest perfumes. Soft clouds of incense, the emblem of prayer and devotion, ascend towards Heaven ; and the most delicate aromatics, placed in gold and silver pans, burn continuously upon the altars.

The selection of the music for the solemnity rests with the Postulator of the Cause, who takes counsel with the master of the famous Julian choir. The greatest composers, such as Raimondi, have written special music for these celebrations, and singers and performers of the highest distinction are called in to assist the local choirs. Thus the sweet strains of the most perfect vocal and instrumental music come to the assembled multitudes like echoes from on high ; the heart is mysteriously stirred ; one's whole being is thrilled with the most exalted and keen emotions. One seems to hear the voice of Angels, the Magnificat of Saints ; the mind and heart, detached from

things of earth, and filled with impressions of awe and reverence, are carried away by strange wistful yearnings after endless harmony and peace.

The Day of the Solemnity

The ceremony of beatification begins at 10 o'clock in the morning, and as the hour draws near, the Cardinals of the Congregation of Rites, the Archbishops, Bishops, and Dignitaries, the Chapter of the Basilica, the Officials of the Congregations, and all distinguished strangers and privileged persons occupy the places specially reserved for them. When the doors of the Basilica are thrown open, a vast multitude from all the nations of the earth rush in like a mighty wave, and occupy the floor of the building. Different places are indicated for men and women, but no division of the sexes is adhered to in the reserved tribunes. No one is admitted without a ticket, and the demand for tickets of admission on these occasions is enormous. It is expected that all present will be dressed in black; and, as directed in their tickets of admission, ladies should wear, not hats, but black veils as a head covering, the Spanish mantilla being the recognised form.

When all have taken their places and silence is

restored the Postulator of the Cause, accompanied by the Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, presents himself before the Cardinal Prefect of the same Congregation and delivers into his hands the Apostolic Brief of Beatification. Next, the Postulator, who sometimes delivers a short discourse in Latin on the virtues and merits of the person to be beatified, presents his petition to the Cardinal Prefect, begging him that he would "*receive and admit the Brief, that it would be published in the Basilica, and that, according to the directions given therein, and the Rite of the Holy Roman Church, the solemnities of the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God N. would be celebrated and that all things else necessary and useful should be done according to the disposition of the Brief for the greater glory of God and of His servant N.*" The Cardinal Prefect, having satisfied himself that the Brief is complete and intact, yields to the prayers of the Postulator and directs that what he asks for should be done. The Postulator returns thanks and goes back to his place. Then the Cardinal Prefect hands the Brief to the Secretary of the Congregation, who bears it to the Cardinal Archpriest of the Basilica, and informs him of the petition of the Postulator and the command of the Congregation. The Archpriest receives the Brief and directs one of the

Masters of Ceremonies to read it in presence of the entire assembly.

At the command of the Cardinal Archpriest, the Master of Ceremonies ascends a platform, and in a clear distinct voice reads the Brief of Beatification, the Chancellor of the Congregation holding in his hands for comparison an authenticated sealed copy of the Brief.

The reading of the Brief is the essential part of the ceremony, and the Holy Father thereby declares that the servant of God is beatified and in the enjoyment of celestial bliss. At this supreme moment the Celebrant of the Mass intones the grand hymn of triumph, the *Te Deum*, and the vast multitudes present stand up whilst the glorious hymn is continued by the world-famed choirs of St. Peter's. Meanwhile, the bells of the Basilica are set ringing, and, in former times, before the Pope was deprived of the temporal power, the cannon of the Castle of St. Angelo joined their deep notes with the sharp volleys of the musketry, and the joyous peals of the bells. At the very moment in which the singing of the hymn is begun the veil which covers the picture of the new Beatus is drawn aside, and the relics of the newly Beatified, hitherto covered, are exposed to view on the Altar. The covering is also withdrawn from the banner which is

suspended on the façade of the Basilica. At the close of the *Te Deum* the Bishop who is to celebrate the Mass sings a prayer specially composed in honour of the new Beatus ; he takes the thurible in his hands and pays the honour of incensation to the relics exposed on the Altar. And all who are present at the sublime ceremony, Cardinals, Bishops, kings, princes, the whole assembly bow down their heads and render due homage and veneration to the picture and relics of the blessed one.

Preparations are now made to offer up Solemn High Mass in honour of the newly beatified inhabitant of Heaven. According to long established custom the office of Celebrant is filled by one of the Bishop-Canons of the Basilica, but the honour of celebrating is often granted to the Bishop of the diocese to which the blessed one belonged. The colour of the vestments for the Mass is in accordance with the rank of the Beatus, white if he is a confessor, and red if a martyr.

The Sovereign Pontiff grants a plenary indulgence to all those who assist at the Holy Sacrifice and honour for the first time the relics of the Beatified.

When the *Gloria in excelsis* is intoned by the Celebrant, the Postulator of the Cause presents an image of the Beatified richly decorated, and a

short biography, neatly ornamented, to the Cardinals of the Congregation, and the Cardinal Archpriest of the Basilica, next to the Consulters and other Officials of the Congregation, then to the Beneficed Clergy, and to some remaining Cardinals, and finally, to the students of the Vatican Seminary, whose gifts are of a less ornamental kind. These distributions are of precept; but, at the discretion of the Postulator, some thousands of smaller pictures and short lives of the Beatified are distributed amongst the assembled multitudes. The latter presentations are usually postponed to the end of Mass to avoid unseemly noise and disturbance during the Holy Sacrifice.

Such is the morning ceremony. In the afternoon the Holy Father comes in person to the place of beatification, and pays homage to the newly Beatified. On this occasion the apse is decorated and lighted as at the earlier ceremony, and the Cardinals are present in their respective places. The Pope prostrates himself before the relics and image of the Beatus, and spends a short time in prayer. Towards the end of the visit, the Postulator of the Cause offers to His Holiness some of the relics of the Beatified, then a costly picture of the blessed one done on white silk with lace fringes and gold; finally, a beautifully ornamented

life of the Beatus, and a rich bouquet of artificial flowers.

For the afternoon ceremony at the beatification of Blessed Gabriel of the Dolours, an immense crowd had gathered at the barriers of the Basilica at two o'clock. The members of the Association of Artistic Workers were on guard and allowed no one to enter who was not provided with the regular ticket. The tribunes were packed, especially those reserved for the patrician families, the Roman nobility, the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, and the Order of the Knights of Malta. The Pope arrived about 5.30 p.m., and took his place in the Sedan chair which was preceded by the under fore-runner of the Apostolic Palaces. At the appearance of the Venerable Pontiff a mighty cheer rose from the crowd, and all saluted and waved their handkerchiefs, whilst the Pope continually raised his hand in benediction. Four grooms in their picturesque costumes of red damask and two sergeants of the Swiss guard headed the cortège, then followed various attendants, the confidential Chamberlains, Monsignor Bisleti, Majordomo of His Holiness, Monsignor Sili, and Monsignor Pescini bearing the cross. Then came the Sovereign Pontiff in his chair, surrounded by a picket of the noble guard, and followed by the

Cardinals accompanied by their Secretaries. Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament was given on this occasion, and the Noble Guard and other Pontifical Corps, drawn up in the Church, gave the military salute. The ceremony closed with the prayer of the Holy Father before the image of the Beatified, and the offering of the customary gifts.

When the Holy Father departs from the afternoon ceremony of Beatification the Postulator of the Cause seeks an audience, and returns thanks to His Holiness for permitting the beatification to be solemnized.

And on the three following days a solemn triduum is celebrated in Rome in the National Church of the Beatus. Pontifical High Mass is offered on each of the days, and an eloquent panegyric is preached on the virtues of the newly Beatified.

Ceremony of Canonisation

The canonisation of a saint is the most solemn and imposing ceremony in the whole liturgy of the Church. It is the grand culminating act of a long series extending over many years, an event which tells us that the Holy Ghost is still with His Church, and that the gates of Heaven are open to all. When a new saint is presented to the

veneration of mankind a thrill of joy and gladness is felt to the end of the world. Millions of hearts rejoice at the happy news. Those who are elevated to the altars of the Church have renewed in themselves the image of Christ, and have secured for themselves an immortality which can never come to earthly greatness. They lift up our souls to Heavenly things, and their example is an inspiration and encouragement to truly noble and heroic deeds. Our thoughts are carried back irresistibly to Rome, the city of the soul, whose stones are bedewed with the precious blood of the martyrs, the queen of the world, the place chosen by God to be the centre of supreme rule in the spiritual order.

The ceremonies of the occasion are appropriate to an event of such deep significance. They are carried out on a scale of splendour and magnificence unequalled in any other celebration. For many centuries the Basilica of St. Peter has been the place appointed for these sacred functions, and this privilege was confirmed by a Bull of Benedict XIV. issued in the year 1641. In beatification the apse only of St. Peter's is ornamented, but in the ceremony of canonisation the decorations are extended over the whole building. Amongst celebrations carried out with

particular splendour may be mentioned the canonisation of St. Francis of Paul in 1519, when for the first time the celebrated tapestries of Flanders, made after designs by Raphael, were used in the scheme of ornamentation.

The decoration of the vast Basilica is a work of great magnitude, the highest architectural skill being employed to ensure good taste and perfect harmony. Immense supplies of the most costly draperies have to be provided, together with candelabra, lustres, and lights of various kinds. Latin inscriptions are prepared, and artists of eminence are employed to execute paintings of the new saint, and depict the miracles approved for the purpose of the solemnity. To reduce expense as far as possible, it is often arranged that the canonisation not of one only but of many beatified servants of God is celebrated at the same time.

In canonisation the most ample provision is made for the accommodation of persons of distinction from every part of the Catholic world. The Papal Throne is erected in front of the altar of the Chair of St. Peter. It is surrounded by benches for the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and Dignitaries of high rank in the Papal chapels. And in this portion of the Basilica are erected special tribunes for reigning

Sovereigns, for the Diplomatic Corps, the Order of Malta, the family of the Pope, the Roman aristocracy, the Prince assisting at the throne, the Major-domo, and other officials of exalted station. In the lateral transept there are galleries reserved for those who have obtained special tickets, and, towards the front, benches are placed for various Chapters who are privileged to occupy them. Special seats are also provided for the Architect in charge of the decorations and for the Postulator of the Cause, who is accompanied by his Advocate and Procurator.

The ceremonies open with a magnificent procession, the full details of which are given in the great work of Benedict XIV., and in other writings of more recent date. The Supreme Pontiff takes part in this procession, which starts from the Sixtine Chapel, descends by the Royal staircase, and enters the Portico of the Vatican Basilica. At the outset the Pope intones the *Ave Maris Stella*, and the hymn is continued by a speical choir.

When the procession has reached its destination the Holy Father ascends the throne prepared for him in the Basilica. And, as soon as the dignitaries and others have taken the places assigned to them, the Cardinal Procurator of the Cause, accompanied by the Master of Ceremonies and the

Consistorial Advocate, approaches the Papal Throne, and the latter, in the name of the Cardinal Procurator, earnestly (*instanter*) beseeches his Holiness to admit into the catalogue of saints the Blessed one on whose cause judgment has been given. The Prelate Secretary of Briefs for Princes responds in Latin that the Holy Father is much edified by the virtues of the Beatus, and by the miracles through which the Lord has manifested his glory, but before pronouncing sentence on a matter of such importance they should invoke light from on high, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the whole celestial court. On this response being given, the personages who advanced to the Papal Throne return to their places, and the Pope and the whole multitude prostrate themselves, and the Litany of the Saints is recited.

When the Litany is finished the same personages again present themselves before the Papal Throne, and the Consistorial Advocate repeats the petition for canonisation. But this time, in addition to the word *instanter* in the formula of petition, he also uses the word *instantius* (" more earnestly "). The Prelate Secretary again replies, declaring that the Holy Father, impressed with the supreme greatness and significance of the act he is asked to perform,

desires that they should implore the special aid of the Holy Ghost, the source of sanctity and light, Who promised to guide His Church, and be with her all days even to the consummation of the world. Thereupon the Pope intones the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and the hymn is sung by the assembled multitudes with the utmost piety and devotion.

The petitioners approach the Pontifical Throne for the third time, and once more make the petition for canonisation, adding to the preceding words, *instanter*, and *instantius* the new word *instantissime* (" most earnestly "). Then the Prelate Secretary replies that his Holiness, fully satisfied that the canonisation is acceptable to Almighty God, will decree that the Blessed one be placed on the roll or catalogue of saints.

At these momentous words, the entire assembly rises and the Pope, wearing the mitre, is assisted to the Pontifical chair, and pronounces *ex Cathedra* this solemn and irrevocable sentence :—

" *In honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and the increase of the Christian Religion, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and ourselves, after mature deliberation, and having many times implored the Divine aid, by the counsel of our venerable brothers, the*

Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and of the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops met together in the city we have decided and defined the Blessed N. N. to be a saint and have inscribed him in the catalogue of the saints, as, by the tenor of these presents, we do decide, define, and inscribe him; ordaining that his memory shall be cherished and honoured with pious devotion by the Universal Church, on his natal day N. N. in each year. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The personages who had presented the three petitions above mentioned approach the Throne once more, and the Consistorial Advocate, in the name of the Cardinal Procurator of the cause, returns thanks to his Holiness, and begs that Apostolic letters be issued in reference to the canonisation. The Holy Father grants the petition, and, in compliance with the prayer of the Protonotaries and Notaries present, he further directs that a record should be prepared to perpetuate the memory of the canonisation.

The Pope then rises, and, without the mitre, intones the *Te Deum*, which is continued by the chanters appointed for the occasion. At the same moment a fanfare of trumpets resounds from the vast dome of the temple, the bells of St. Peter's are set ringing as a signal for the other

churches, and joyous peals from all the church bells in the city proclaim the glorious news of the canonisation.

After the *Te Deum* the Holy Father recites a prayer composed specially for invoking the intercession of the new saint And with the Apostolic Benediction imparted by the Supreme Pontiff the first part of the ceremonial comes to a conclusion.

The Offering of Wax Candles and other Objects.

The act of canonisation is followed by solemn High Mass, which is usually celebrated by the Pope himself. The Ritual of this Mass is the same as that observed on other occasions with one remarkable exception. At the Offertory a significant ceremony takes place which requires a word of explanation. It consists in an offering of wax candles, bread, wine, water, two turtle doves, two pigeons, and a number of smaller birds.

These oblations—which are repeated for each saint if more than one is canonised—are set forth on a credence table at the left hand side of the altar. There are five wax candles beautifully painted. In the centre is an image of the saint

for whom the offering is made, and underneath the Papal arms. Then there are two large loaves, placed on silver salvers with the Papal arms in relief; two small barrels, one gold, containing the offering of wine, the other silver, containing the offering of water; three cages, the first containing two turtle doves, the second, two pigeons, and the third, small birds of different species. These offerings are presented to the Pope at the Pontifical Throne in accordance with prescribed ceremonial.

It has been shown by learned writers on the subject that the custom of making offerings to the Pope on these occasions reaches back to the early ages of the Church. During the Mass it was customary, not only to present the bread and wine necessary for the Sacrifice, but also other valuable offerings for various purposes. As a rule the offerings were directed to four different ends: first to provide the matter necessary for the Holy Sacrifice; secondly, a part was sent to the bishop; thirdly, a portion was blessed and distributed amongst the congregation as a sign of Communion and charity; and, finally, a part was set aside for the needs of the Church and the maintenance of the ministers.

But it may be further asked is there any mystical meaning in presenting these particular

objects to the Holy Father on the occasion of canonising a saint. Why is it that, out of the immense variety of good things placed by the Creator at our disposal, wax candles, bread, wine, water, turtle doves, pigeons, and small birds should be chosen to express our homage and veneration ? Spiritual writers explain that they are symbols of the virtues of the saints, and that they are calculated to lift up our hearts and minds to the love and contemplation of the supernatural.

The *wax candles*, according to the doctrine of St. Fulbert, typify the head and members of the Church, the flame signifying the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is a consuming fire, and the wax, one of the most delicate substances in nature, indicating that the members of the Church should be pure before God, preserving the true faith animated by good works. The canonised saints have copied the virtues of our Saviour in their faith, in the excellence of their works, in the purity of their intention. To use the language of the Gospel, they have been a burning and a shining light, not placed under a bushel, but on a chandelier to give light to the whole house.

The *bread* which is offered indicates that the saints have no other nourishment but Jesus in the

Holy Sacrament. Our Divine Lord has said :— "I am the living bread that came down from Heaven . . . and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (St. John vi.) And, for the saints of God, this bread was their life, their joy in this world ; and it was to be also the eternal prize of their charity and love. As explained by other spiritual writers, the bread signifies the Word of God, inasmuch as the saints nourished their souls by Catholic doctrine, and by the example of their lives made this teaching efficacious to guide the people in the way of salvation.

The *wine* is the symbol of sanctifying grace, and there is no other natural product, says St. Cyprian, that so vividly conveys this meaning.

And with what wisdom is the offering of *water* connected with that of wine. Water is a figure of the tribulations of this world, and the saints, absorbed in the contemplation of divine things, can cry out with the spouse in the Canticles : "Great waters cannot extinguish charity in me."

Passing to the *pigeons* and *turtle doves*, the chief characteristics of the turtle dove are fidelity or faithfulness and love of solitude. Then the dove is the messenger of peace, and the doves offered at the ceremony of canonisation are an indication that the saints are in possession of peace, and that

their struggles being now over, they will reign henceforth with God in the very centre of happiness and peace.

Lastly, the *small birds*, inhabitants of the air, and resting but a brief space upon the earth, indicate those qualities of the saints, by which they seek to escape the treacherous snares of the hunter and tend to their heavenly home. The small birds love the free air of heaven, and the saints of God, detached from things of earth, find their only attraction and gratification in the bliss of Paradise.

* * * *

The canonisation of a saint is a most remarkable event occurring only at rare intervals. It represents the highest honour which human society can render to any of its members, and the honour is open to all without exception of persons. With the strength of infallible truth it expresses the complete and final triumph of grace over nature. The canonised saint may belong to any grade of society, or to any age since the coming of our Lord; he may have any portion of the habitable globe for his birth-place. He may be born amid the snows of the poles or the burning heats of the tropics. The saint may have been the denizen of some deep forest or mountain fastness

far removed from the paths of civilisation, he, who, as the poet says "in the palace aisles of untrod woods doth walk a king." There are uncivilised tribes wise only with the wisdom of nature, and young with the terrible youth of the savage. There are men who begin history, with a faith of their own, unquestioning, immovable, permeating their lives and inseparable from their every thought and action, men of fierce elemental strength and courage, men of untamed primitive instincts filled with the love of life and the lust of conquest. Then there is the highest product of modern civilisation, self-conscious, self-centred, with worldly culture, or perhaps the Hedonist whose chief good is the pursuit of pleasure. There is the young man walking in the ways of his heart, a law unto himself; and the refined tender virgin whose delicate nature shrinks instinctively from the very thought of torture and pain. It matters not; the grace of God can mould them, can give strength to the weak, light to those who cannot see, and can subdue the fiercest passions and propensities of which human nature is capable. No human being was ever born who cannot truly say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me." Even the Apostles were men of strong passionate feelings, slow to believe, dull of com-

prehension. Our Blessed Saviour rebuked them for their incredulity. And yet divine grace obtained the victory, and their faults and shortcomings were consumed, as time wore on, in the fire enkindled by their Master. And so complete was their triumph, that they, one and all, faced torture without shrinking, and drank the cup of martyrdom for the faith of their Lord.

So it has been in every age since then, and will be to the end of time. Whilst sin exists in the world the streams of grace and mercy must continue to flow. And now and again the operations of grace are so complete and perfect that some child of the Church is able to practise in heroic degree those virtues which are the basis of all religion and society. Amongst those who reach this high standard of perfection there are faithful souls whose sanctity is hidden from human eyes, and whose virtues are seen only by the all-seeing eye of God. But when the holiness of a servant of God is widely known, and illustrated by miraculous gifts, then the Church, faithful to her Divine mission, takes the cause in hand, and, if the rigorous tests are successfully borne, decrees the honours of canonisation, honours before which the greatest triumphs of ancient Rome with all their pomp are as nothing. The Catholic world is stirred to its

centre ; transports of joy, looks of love, expressions of gratitude and wonder, starting from Rome and extending throughout the Church, begin for the saint that triumph which will endure to the end of time. And gradually these demonstrations of joy, gratitude, love and wonder give way to deeper feelings which sink into the heart, and inspire the brethren to imitate in their measure, the noble example of Him who has been placed upon the altars of the Church. And bowing down in homage before the august tribunal established by God on earth, the faithful are stirred to sentiments of more filial love and loyalty towards Mother Church, and they adore, in all reverence and humility, the infinite charity of God Who, in the words of the inspired writer, is wonderful in His saints.

CHAPTER XIV

Veneration and Invocation of Saints

The subject of canonisation naturally leads to the question of the cultus or religious honour to be paid to the saints, and in a treatise like the present it is fitting that some explanation should be given of the Catholic teaching on this subject. This is all the more necessary because of the severity and bitterness of the attacks made upon the teaching and practice of the Church regarding the veneration of saints. The custom of honouring the saints and the doctrine underlying it were assailed in the early centuries by the Manicheans and other heretics; and their assaults were ably refuted by writers of such eminence as St. Jerome and St. Augustine. In the sixteenth and later centuries Protestants, and the various sects which sprang from Protestantism, made common cause with infidels in assailing the doctrine, and rejecting it as superstitious, impious and idolatrous. With indescribable vehemence they returned again and again to the assault, openly charging the Catholic Church with the horrible crime of

idolatry. And, without doubt, all this noise and fury deceived large numbers of well-meaning but incautious people, who, in their misguided efforts to avoid the taint of idolatry, remained outside the pale of the Church. The accusations of these adversaries have, to a large extent, spent their force in our own day, and more specious and plausible forms of attack have been devised. It is, however, the duty of every Catholic to be able to give reasons for the faith that is in him, and, according to the measure of his opportunities, to show to the world the harmony and consistency of the religion he professes.

As in other departments of Catholic controversy much of the discussion is due to error regarding the real question at issue, so here a great deal of the ill-feeling and bitterness, so disastrous in their consequences, arose from misconception of the real doctrine of the Church. It is proposed then to state briefly the true Catholic idea of cultus or religious honour, and then to show its reasonableness and harmony with revealed truth, thus providing a reply to the objections of our adversaries, and proving especially that the superstructure of Catholic devotion to Blessed Mary and all saints is built upon a solid and careful foundation of revealed dogma.

The word *Cultus* is used to designate both the honour paid to God alone and the honour given sometimes to creatures on account of their special connection with God. In the ordinary use of speech various terms are used to give expression to this twofold honour—such as, worship, adoration, cultus, veneration, reverence, and the like.* But though these words are generally regarded as synonymous, and are often applied indiscriminately to the religious honour paid to God and to creatures, yet the honour paid to the Supreme Being is essentially and intrinsically different from that which is paid to any created thing. Honour is given on account of the excellence which is in the subject honoured, and varies with the nature of this excellence. The word *Latria*, which in itself simply means "service," whether rendered to God or man, has, by the usage of the Church,

* "A great part of the objection to the language of Catholic devotion arises from the practice of confining certain words to their conventional sense, instead of interpreting them according to the intention of the writer or speaker. . . . Thus there is really no difference in fact between the terms 'worship' and 'veneration'; yet, while mere human qualities are considered to warrant veneration, Catholics are charged with idolatry who speak of the Blessed Virgin as an object of worship; a charge the more impertinent when we remember that in the words of the marriage rite, common to Catholics with Protestants, this term is actually employed in the sense of 'service' or 'devotion.' The word 'adoration' again, according to its etymology, need mean no more than 'invocation.' All such words mean only what they are meant to imply."—Canon Oakley, "The Leading Topics, &c.," p. 74.

become a technical term for that supreme worship which can lawfully be paid to God alone. "Dulia" is the secondary veneration which Catholics give to saints and angels as the servants and special friends of God. Dulia is subdivided into the simple cultus of dulia and "hyperdulia," which is that higher veneration which we give to the Blessed Virgin, who is the most exalted of all the saints by her merits and dignity, though, of course, infinitely inferior to God.

If, again, there is question of the cultus paid to relics and images, it is right to observe that such honour is altogether relative—that is to say, "they are not in themselves, and, strictly speaking, adored and honoured, but all adoration and veneration is referred to the prototypes or objects which they represent, inasmuch as images or relics have in themselves no dignity or excellence to which such honour properly appertains." * The prohibition of idolatry, it is needless to say, continues in full force, but the danger of falling into this crime has, to a very great extent, passed away from Christian nations. The Council of Trent advocates the proper use of images, but earnestly exhorts that care should be taken to remove everything which would be an occasion of scandal to the rude and ignorant

* *Petavius de Incarnatione*, xv. 17.

The purpose of images is to set Christ, His Blessed Mother, the saints and angels before our eyes, but, adds the Council, "the honour which is given to them is referred to the objects which they represent, so that through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads and kneel, we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose likeness they are." This is the Tridentine doctrine, and the use and veneration of images in this sense dates from the very earliest times.

To vindicate the teaching and practice of the Church in regard to the religious honour to be paid to the saints, it will be necessary to prove two propositions which will be treated as briefly as possible.

First, the cultus of the saints, so far from being idolatrous, is based upon Divine revelation and promotes the worship of the true God.

This proposition may be clearly proved from Sacred Scripture, from the custom always existing in the Church, and from the principles admitted by adverse writers.

The Old Testament represents Patriarchs, Prophets and Judges as paying religious honour to saints and angels. To omit what is recorded of Abraham, Lot, and Jacob, we read of Josue that when he had heard that the man whom he saw standing with a drawn sword was a prince of

the army of the Lord he " fell on his face to the ground, and *worshipping* said," &c., *Josue* v. 15. Nor can it be doubted that the honour rendered here was religious and not of a civil or political kind, for the person honoured was not engaged in business of state, but was the special messenger of God, and received religious homage because of this exalted office. Neither does the Sacred Word disapprove of such acts of veneration. On the contrary, these men are set up before the world as bright examples of religion and piety, and God even commands that His messengers should be honoured.

The clearest and most authentic records show that the custom of paying religious cultus to the saints existed in every age of the Church. Feasts in honour of the martyrs were in existence from the earliest times. Sacrifices were offered in their honour throughout the universal Church at every period of her history. The existence of altars, temples, and oratories erected to perpetuate the sacred memory of the martyrs gives additional proof of this religious cultus and veneration. It is unnecessary to multiply instances; devotion to the saints grew, not by magic and at once and in every quarter, but gradually with the growth and development of the Catholic Church.

It is true that religiously minded and intelligent Protestants no longer bring the charge of direct idolatry against Catholics for venerating the Blessed Virgin and the other saints. Still, there is no other devotional practice which generates such bitter prejudice and excites such strong feelings of anger and exasperation against the Church as the custom of paying honour to our Blessed Lady. And many Protestants allege, with untiring reiteration, that the natural effect of Catholic devotion to Mary is to beget a quasi-idolatry and obscure the thought of God. It is worth while to devote some consideration to this vitally important question.

There is no Catholic but will readily admit that if the worship of the Blessed Virgin and the other saints interfered with the worship of Almighty God such devotion could not have the sanction of God or His Church. But Catholics not only deny that any such effect follows from this religious practice, but maintain confidently that these devotions actually promote in a very special degree the genuine love of God and of Jesus Christ. It may be said that the key-note of Catholic devotion to our Blessed Lady is that Mary is the way to Jesus as Jesus is the way to the Father. God is supreme, and the idea of God's supremacy is deeply and firmly

planted in the mind of the most ignorant member of the Church. Catholics are devout to our Lady, because this devotion leads them invariably to a stronger and warmer worship of her adorable Son.

Man was created for one end—to know, love and serve God here, and be happy with Him for ever hereafter, or, more briefly, for the knowledge and love of God. And, as is constantly proclaimed within the Church, men are more excellent and more perfect precisely in proportion as they grow in this knowledge and love of God, as they are more prompt to recognise and obey the Divine will. But Catholics maintain, and experience also proves, that this knowledge and love may be at times more effectively promoted by devotion to Mary than by trying to fix one's thoughts exclusively on God and Christ. Take an ordinary pious Catholic, the class of men who are free from mortal sin, and firmly resolved by God's grace never to fall into grevious sin, it must be admitted that with such men "it often requires far less effort and exertion to fix their thoughts on a created person, such as Mary, than on God Incarnate; and on such occasions, therefore, their prayer to her will be far more earnest, far less distracted, far more heartfelt than it could have been if

addressed to God and Christ. Now, there are two different effects to be considered in the case of prayer. On the one hand, the various graces given by God of His own good pleasure in response to it; and, on the other hand, the result it produces, in the way (as it were) of natural cause and effect on the will and on the emotions, for supernatural phenomena, no less than natural, have fixed mutual relations of their own. As to the former of these effects, there is no pretence for saying that prayer to Mary is less efficacious than direct prayer to Jesus; for it is ultimately addressed to Him, and that through the most acceptable of all mediators. As to the latter effect—its quasi-natural effect on the intellect, the will, the emotions—let this be borne in mind; it is a vitally important psychological fact, and one on which theologians lay the most earnest stress, that no man can desire evil for its own sake; that all men's thoughts and affections would be directed to God in one unintermittent stream, were it not for the innumerable corrupt interests and associations which enchain them by the cords of pleasure. In proportion then, as at any moment I am disentangled from these meshes, in that very proportion I am more disposed to obey God's Will and follow His preference. Now, remember

that every Catholic regards Mary as absolutely free from the slightest approach to moral imperfection of any imaginable kind; and that her contemplation, therefore, is among the most powerful correctives of every inordinate and irregular passion. But in proportion as every inordinate and irregular passion is corrected in that very proportion the love of God is fostered and promoted; and the love of God, therefore, instead of being impeded, is promoted with singular efficacy by prayer to the most Holy Virgin." *

Nor can it be contended that amongst Catholics collectively devotion to Mary makes the worship of God and of Jesus perfunctory and uninteresting. The very contrary holds beyond all possibility of contradiction. An ounce of fact and experience is worth a ton of reasoning, and it is a matter of palpable experience that wherever devotion to Mary is very prevalent, there the worship of the Sacred Humanity has a warmth

* Dr. William John Ward—*Dublin Review*, 1866. In his admirable essay the writer says: "Protestants assure us that Italian brigands, who never think for a moment of God and their eternal destiny, often retain the habit of invoking the Mother of God; nay, of praying her to assist them in their nefarious schemes. But these men have broken off all connection with the Church. All we have to say is that, scoundrel for scoundrel—if brigands there must be—we would rather that a scoundrel retained habits of prayer to our Lady, than that there should be no link whatever between him and Christianity."

and an earnestness not to be found elsewhere. The Catholic Church is the natural home of devotion to the Mother of God, and so, too, the Catholic Church is the home of those countless devotions to our Divine Lord, to the Passion in its various aspects, such as the Sacred Face and the Five Wounds, to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Divine Infancy, and to the Sacred Heart, that beautiful devotion which has been productive of so much good in our own day. The constant habitual thought and remembrance of Mary is a powerful means of grace, and is a most invaluable help towards acquiring a true love of her Son.

Spiritual writers make a distinction between what are called respectively *sensible* and *solid* piety; by the former they mean the emotions of gratitude, tender love, hope, joy, and the like produced by the contemplation of heavenly things, and by the latter they understand the ready promptitude of the will towards the love and service of God. Now, though emotions have no merit in themselves, their value is simply incalculable as means towards promoting that which is valuable and meritorious. During periods of sensible devotion, says Fr. Faber, "all trains of thought which concern heavenly things display a copiousness and exuberance which

they never had before. Meditations are fluent and abundant. The virtues no longer bring forth their actions in pain and travail, but with facility and abundance, and their offspring are rich, beautiful and heroic." * And, as showing from a still higher authority the value of *sensible* piety, we need only bear in mind that the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in examining the virtues of a servant of God, requires that virtuous acts should be elicited promptly, easily, and with delight and pleasure. This sensible devotion, so conducive to solid piety, is fostered in a singular degree by tender devotion to Mary. "To her," says Fr. Newman, "belong, as being a creature, a natural claim on our sympathy and familiarity, in that she is nothing else than our fellow. She is our pride—in the poet's words, 'our tainted nature's solitary boast.' We look to her without any fear, any remorse. Our heart yearns towards that pure Virgin, that gentle Mother, and our congratulations follow her as she rises from Nazareth and Ephesus, through the choirs of angels to her throne on high." †

A kindred advantage of constant pervasive devotion to our Blessed Lady and the saints is

* *Growth in Holiness*, p. 428.
† *Letter to Dr. Pusey*, p. 433.

depicted in beautiful language by Dr. Ward. "The mind," he says, "has a most real capacity for apprehension and love of the Infinite; but however intensely that capacity be exercised, there still remains a very large residue of affection for finite objects. Now, it is the Church's end that the hearts of her children be anchored in the invisible world. This great end, then, is most inadequately promoted, unless their love for the finite, as well as for the Infinite, find great scope in their religious exercises. And, more particularly, it is of inestimable value that that unspeakably tender and powerful feeling—a child's love towards its mother be allowed a hearty vent on such a being as Mary. Lastly, their love of finite persons reacts most powerfully on, and indefinitely intensifies, their love of God, and gives to that love an otherwise untasted quality of tenderness and passionate devotion."

So far then from obscuring the thought of God devotion to Mary, and the habit of approaching our Lord through a mediatrix, affords an inestimable help in placing Him before us in the position of Supreme Being, and engraves upon the imagination His Own Divine Personality. And it is no wonder that the Church, by her infallible magisterium, or office of teaching, should strongly

recommend to all her children the worship of Blessed Mary and all the angels and saints.

Second.—Invocation of the saints is lawful and useful.

It should be distinctly stated, at the outset, that there is no question here of the necessity of invoking the saints, for all Catholics admit that the invocation of saints is not absolutely necessary for salvation. Nevertheless, the truth enunciated in this proposition is an essential part of Catholic doctrine. Bishops are enjoined by the Council of Trent to teach the faithful that "the Saints reigning with Christ offer their prayers for men to God; that it is good and useful to call upon them with supplication, and to have recourse to their prayers, their help and assistance for obtaining benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour."

From these words it follows—1st, "that the Invocation of the Saints is good and useful; 2nd, that help and advantage is to be hoped for, not from the saints, but from God at their intercession; 3rd, that the prayers and intercession of the saints are based on the merits of Christ Jesus who is our sole Saviour and Redeemer, and, therefore, our sole Mediator, properly speaking, who is such by nature and by His office

and by His own merits. The saints are mediators only in a secondary sense, and, broadly speaking, who can obtain nothing for us except through the merits of Christ. 4th We learn, in fine, that the invocation of saints is to be regarded as a certain aid by which we more readily get, through their intercession, the advantages we beg from God through the merits of Christ."*

Understood in this the true Catholic sense, it is easy to show from the teaching of Sacred Scripture that the invocation of saints is lawful and good and useful. The Apostle St. Paul, in almost all his Epistles, commends himself to the prayers of the faithful. In his Epistle to the Romans he says, Chap. XV., v. 30, " I beseech, you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God." And in the Epistle to the Ephesians he has these words, Chap. VI., v. 18, " In the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints." And so on through most of the other Epistles. It is true that the Apostle in these passages commends himself to the prayers of the living. But no reason can be assigned why souls that have gone to God should cease to make intercession for their brethren; and if,

* *Perrone*, Vol. II., p. 413.

as is clear from St. Paul's teaching, the prayers of the living do not detract from the Divine Benignity and the mediatorship of our Saviour, how can it be maintained that the prayers of those souls reigning with God are derogatory to the Divine Goodness and to our Blessed Lord ?

The only objection that can be raised in this connection is that departed saints cannot be aware of the prayers and wants of the faithful. But throughout the whole of the New Testament there is no truth more strongly insisted on than that we are members of Christ and bound to each other as members of the same body. God makes the union between the Church militant and the Church triumphant complete on both sides, and enables us to speak to them in order that they may intercede for us. In the Gospel of St. Luke, Chap. XV., v. 10, our Saviour tells us expressly that the "angels rejoice over one sinner who does penance"; and we are told in the Apocalypse that the elders in Heaven offer our prayers to God. "And another angel came, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer up the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God" (Chap. VIII., v. 3). The saints then hear our prayers, and this proposition was held

as certain by the Fathers of the Church, though, of course, no Catholic holds that departed saints are omnipresent or omniscient. The way in which the saints who are reigning with Christ hear our prayers is a matter of speculation which does not concern us here. Some of the Fathers suggest that sometimes the saints are near those who are calling on them. The more general opinion at the present day is that the blessed, beholding God, see in Him as in a mirror the needs and prayers of their clients, as well as whatever else it pleases God to reveal to them of earthly things. The blessed see God face to face, and in this facial or beatific vision they see to some extent the things of this world. The manner in which the revelation is made is uncertain, but the fact of revelation is beyond all doubt.

In addition to the testimony of Scripture, the practice and tradition of the Church, reaching back to Apostolic times, bear witness to the intercession and invocation of saints and angels. To omit the Œcumenical Councils of Chalcedon, Constantinople, and Nice, there are most ancient witnesses of this pious Catholic practice. The "Acts of the Martyrs" tell us that the contemporaries of St. Ignatius, St. John's disciple, saw the martyr in vision praying for us after his

death. The testimonies are continued down to the early Fathers, from whom we receive fresh evidence. Cyprian thus exhorts those who may be martyred first :—"Let our love before God endure ; let not our prayer to the Father's mercy cease for our brethren and sisters." The same devotion to the saints is abundantly proved from Origen and from numerous passages from the Fathers of a later date. Long quotations from these Fathers may be seen in Petavius, Perrone, and in the works of most dogmatic theologians ; and so abundant are they that it is unnecessary to refer to individual passages.

The veneration and invocation of saints was practised throughout the Church in the fourth century, and such a devotion could not spring up as if by magic in every quarter. If it were a novelty or innovation the Bishops of the Church, whose special office it is to guard the sacred deposit of faith, would at once raise their voices in vigorous remonstrance, and there is no trace of protest to be found in all history. The very contrary holds emphatically and undeniably ; for Vigilantius and Faustus, who were opposed to the devotion, were denounced as heretics and innovators by the unanimous voice of the Episcopacy. It follows that the doctrine of the invocation of saints existed at all times in

the Church, and no doubt can be entertained of its Apostolic origin.

Nor should we forget that this consoling Catholic teaching is in accordance with right reason and in absolute harmony with the dictates of our nature. No one can with any show of reason bring a charge of treason or *lèse majesté* against a trusted official who uses his mediatorial influence with the king for the purpose of obtaining some special grace or favour. And how, then, it may be asked, can the faithful supplicant be regarded as doing injury to the Divine Majesty when he calls upon the saints the special friends of God, seated in the Heavenly Court, to use their intercessory power for obtaining through the merits of Christ the assistance of which he stands in need? The thought arising from this teaching is full of sweetness and consolation. We are here in a state of exile, and what is there more calculated to give us comfort, to help and cheer us on in the narrow way, than the thought that death with all its terrors cannot altogether separate us from those who are dear to us, and that we are still in such close touch and union with those who have gone before us, and who are enjoying that celestial bliss for which we too are destined? It is a most elevating and inspiring thought, a thought

which draws still closer the bonds of mutual charity and love, that those who are enjoying ineffable felicity in the Bosom of the Eternal Father do not lose sight of us, that we can address them from afar, and that, in response to our prayers they are able, through the merciful dispensation of God, to help us along the thorny path which they have so bravely trodden. "What the saints have done we can do," says St. Augustine, and the doctrine of the Communion of Saints teaches us who are exiles *in via* to imitate the examples and follow in the footprints of those who are crowned *in patria*.

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A word may be said in conclusion on the value of reading the "Lives of the Saints," and the advantages to be derived from this excellent practice. Next to the reading of the Word of God it may be said that there is no other form of spiritual reading which confers such signal favours on the soul as the perusal of the biographies of saints. Divine revelation gives us the perfect model, and the nearer we approach the revealed standard of holiness the more perfect will be our lives. And all the saints are conspicuous for the fidelity with which they copied in their lives the maxims and teachings of the

inspired Word of God. Hence the lives of the saints are called by spiritual writers "the Gospel in practice"; and here, in the words of St. Francis of Sales, "you may behold as in a looking-glass the portraiture of the Christian life."

Some of the more recent writers give a word of useful advice to readers of hagiological literature. They point out two extremes which have to be guarded against, coldness, suspicion, and a doubting temper on the one hand, and on the other a blind credulity and readiness to accept without due caution whatever is set down in these lives. It is most important to pursue the middle course between coldness and credulity, for in the one case there is danger of tampering with the great prerogative of infallibility, and in the other, if what is possible, or probable, is confounded with what is true, the admixture may readily lead us into superstition and allure us from the analogy of the faith. "Indiscreet corporal penances," says Fr. Faber, "peculiar observances of interior mortification breeding scruples because unsuited to us, a morbid hankering after raptures, ecstasies, and other supernatural gifts, a conceited fancy (perhaps one of the most perilous delusions) that we are being raised to the higher degrees of mental prayer, affected singularities in good works, disregard

and disesteem of our director as though he misunderstood what God is doing in our souls—these are some of the errors into which an undiscerning study of the 'Lives of the Saints' has led and may lead ; and the simple emuneration of them is a sufficient condemnation." But in our day there is much more likelihood of the other extreme—that is to say, to reject everything that is not positively *de fide*. This cold, dry, doubting temper, even when falling short of heresy, is most injurious to the soul, as may be perceived from the fact that it is so utterly at variance with the disposition of the child, the model which our Lord sets before us in the Gospel. The sure way to avoid error in either direction is first to adopt the authoritative teaching of the Church for one's rule and guide, rejecting as beyond all controversy false whatever is opposed to that teaching ; and, secondly, as a loving child of the Church to put one's uuderstanding and feelings in harmony with the genius and temper of his spiritual Mother, and accept not merely the dogmas of faith, but the other important doctrines according to their varying degrees of certitude.

All the saints and spiritual writers are unanimous in recommending most earnestly the study of saints' lives as an effective means of

sanctification. In his last instruction to his penitents, St. Philip Neri, speaking with unusual tenderness, was particularly urgent about three things—frequentation of the Sacraments, attending sermons, and reading the "Lives of the Saints." The saint knew that reading, whether good or bad, exercises a very strong influence in the formation of character, and that when one reads the life of a saint with the proper dispositions, grace comes to the aid of nature, and helps still further to mould the reader after the model of him whose life is read.

Further, it is a matter of history that some of those men who rose to the greatest heights of sanctity owe their conversion to the perusal of saints' biographies. During the period of his conversion the "Lives of the Saints" were the constant study of Alphonsus Liguori. And everyone has heard that the "Lives of the Saints," read by Ignatius on his bed of sickness were, through the mercy of God, the instrument of his conversion.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Probably most Catholics have at some time experienced for themselves the benefits to be derived from a study of the "Lives of the Saints." But we cannot help giving one other example. It is narrated by no less an authority

than Fr. Faber,* and will form a fitting conclusion to this work. John Columbino led a worldly, covetous and irreligious life, but one day, as his quaint old chronicler describes it, he went home more hungry than usual; and because his dinner was a little delayed, he got out of temper and abused both his wife and servant, saying he was in a hurry to go back to his counting-house. "You have too much money, and spend too little, John," said his wife; "why are you putting yourself out in this way? while I am getting things ready, take this book and read a little"; so saying she gave him a volume containing some lives of the saints. Giovanni, somewhat nettled, took the book and threw it into the middle of the room saying, "you think of nothing but legends; I have the warehouse to go to." Presently, however, his conscience began to sting him with remorse; he took the book from the ground, and opening it lighted upon the Life of St. Mary of Egypt. Shortly afterwards his wife called him to dinner: "Wait awhile," replied Giovanni, forgetting his hunger; and on he went. The legend was long, but as his old biographer observes, there was a celestial melody in it; time sped; his wife looked at him; Giovanni was

* On Beatification and Canonisation, p. 10.

still reading, and what was more, grace was working. There was conversion in the legend of the penitent of Egypt; the story softened his heart; it was his thought by day, and his dream by night; the churlish Giovanni began to give alms, and always just double of what was asked of him; and to that reading was owing the outburst of the love of God which the blessed Giovanni spread with his "poor sheep of Jesus," the Gesuati, from one end of Italy to the other, from the Pope at Viterbo down to the swineherd of Sienna.

APPENDIX

EXPENSES OF CANONISATION.

In describing the various steps necessary for canonisation nothing has hitherto been said on the important question of expenses. There is no doubt that the actual expenses incurred in the long procedure are very considerable, though much less than the popular estimate.

In the Middle Ages the amount expended in canonisations was far higher than in modern times. Tapestries and paintings of priceless value were often used for the ornamentation of St. Peter's; and, not to speak of the cost of the judicial inquiries, the decorations for the final ceremony alone sometimes reached enormous sums. But the Church, as is well known, was possessed of very rich endowments in those days, and could more readily afford a generous expenditure. In the course of time, however, it was found necessary to cut down the lavish and useless expenses that had been gradually and almost imperceptibly introduced. The first step in this direction was taken by Alexander VII. (1655–1667), who curtailed the amounts to be expended on the decorations for the ceremonies of beatification and canonisation. Succeeding Popes reduced these expenses still further, and regulated

many other items of expenditure on a scale which should be strictly observed. Benedict XIV. (1740–1758) fixed the tariff with still greater detail and regard for economy, and the regulations adopted by him have remained in force until quite recently.

Some slight changes were made in the scale of Benedict XIV. by Cardinal Aloisi-Masella when he was Prefect of the Congregation of Rites. Here again the tendency has been towards moderation and economy; and by this recent regulation, now in force, the tariff is fixed with very minute details down even to the small gratuities to be given to the servants of the Cardinals.

A printed list of the approved scale of charges is given to the Postulator by the Secretary of the Congregation; and it is the duty of the judges of the various Processes to see that this fixed standard is observed, and that nothing excessive is exacted. The officials who work for the cause receive the payments prescribed for their services —the postulator and his assistants, the promoter of the faith and sub-promoter, the advocates, procurators, notaries, clerks, translators. The judges, whether ordinary or delegated, never in any circumstances receive payment for the discharge of their duties. But if they are bound to attendance in choir they are dispensed from attendance on the days on which they are engaged in the work of the Process, and they receive their portion of the choir distributions as if they were present in choir. This regulation for the judges was made by the late

Pope Leo XIII. in 1893, and was confirmed by a decree of the present Pontiff, Pius X., in 1904. And if the duties of the judges require absence from home they are entitled to travelling expenses and to the cost of frugal maintenance during the time of absence.

There are still some expenses which are not specified, and which are left to the discretion of the postulator. Such is the cost of biographies and paintings of the new beatus or saint which are presented to the Pope, the Cardinals and other privileged persons. But making allowance for this item, and for the varying expenses of printing, of the number of Processes and the sessions in each, the scale of charges has now been so definitely fixed that the expenses in any cause of canonisation can be approximately estimated beforehand.

What then is the sum total of the expenses incurred in the canonisation of a saint? Obviously it must vary considerably with the number of Processes and the work of each, together with the expenditure on the distributions just mentioned. There are servants of God who fill a large space in the pages of history, and in their causes the expenses must be abnormally high. Such, for example, is Blessed Joan of Arc, beatified this year, and in this instance the entire cost of beatification is said to have reached the sum of £25,000. But this is an exceptional case; and taking an ordinary instance, a reasonable estimate of the total expenditure from the first step taken in the diocese of the servant of God to the com-

pletion of the ceremony of canonisation is about £10,000. This sum would be expended somewhat as follows:— The cost of beatification alone from the first Process to the close of the ceremony would be about £4,000. And of the remaining £6,000, over £4,000 would be required for the canonisation ceremony, and the remainder for the expenses of the enquiry into the miracles that must be worked after beatification through the intercession of the Beatus if the cause is to proceed to canonisation. The total expenses connected with the ceremony of canonisation is usually more than double the sum mentioned; but as it generally happens that more than one servant of God is canonised at the same time, and the cost is divided between the different Postulators, the expenses for each of those canonised amount to about £4,000 when two are canonised at the same ceremony. An example will make the matter clear.

The Most Revd. Diomede Panici, Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, published an account of the expenses of the ceremony of canonisation by Leo XIII. in the year 1897 of St. Anthony Maria Zaccaria and St. Peter Fourier. The final account taken from "The Catholic Encyclopædia" is subjoined:—

	Lire.
"To decoration of the Basilica, lights, architectural designs, labour and superintendence	152,840.58
Procession, Pontifical Mass, preparation of Altars in Basilica	8,114.58

12/3/6